DAYA SATAKAM

of

VEDANTA DESIKA

●

English Commentary

by

D. RAMASWAMY AYYANGAR

ADVOCATE, MADRAS.

●

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DAYA SATAKAM

OF

VEDANTA DESIKA

(A hymn in praise of the Mercy of Lord Sri Venkateswara)

WITH

COMMENTARY IN ENGLISH

BY

D. RAMASWAMY AYYANGAR,

Advocate, Madras.

FOREWORD

BY

The Honourable Sri P. V. RAJAMANNAR,

(*Chief Justice, High Court, Madras*)

INTRODUCTION BY

Sri C. ANNA RAO, *Executive Officer*,

T. T. DEVASTHANAMS, TIRUPATI.

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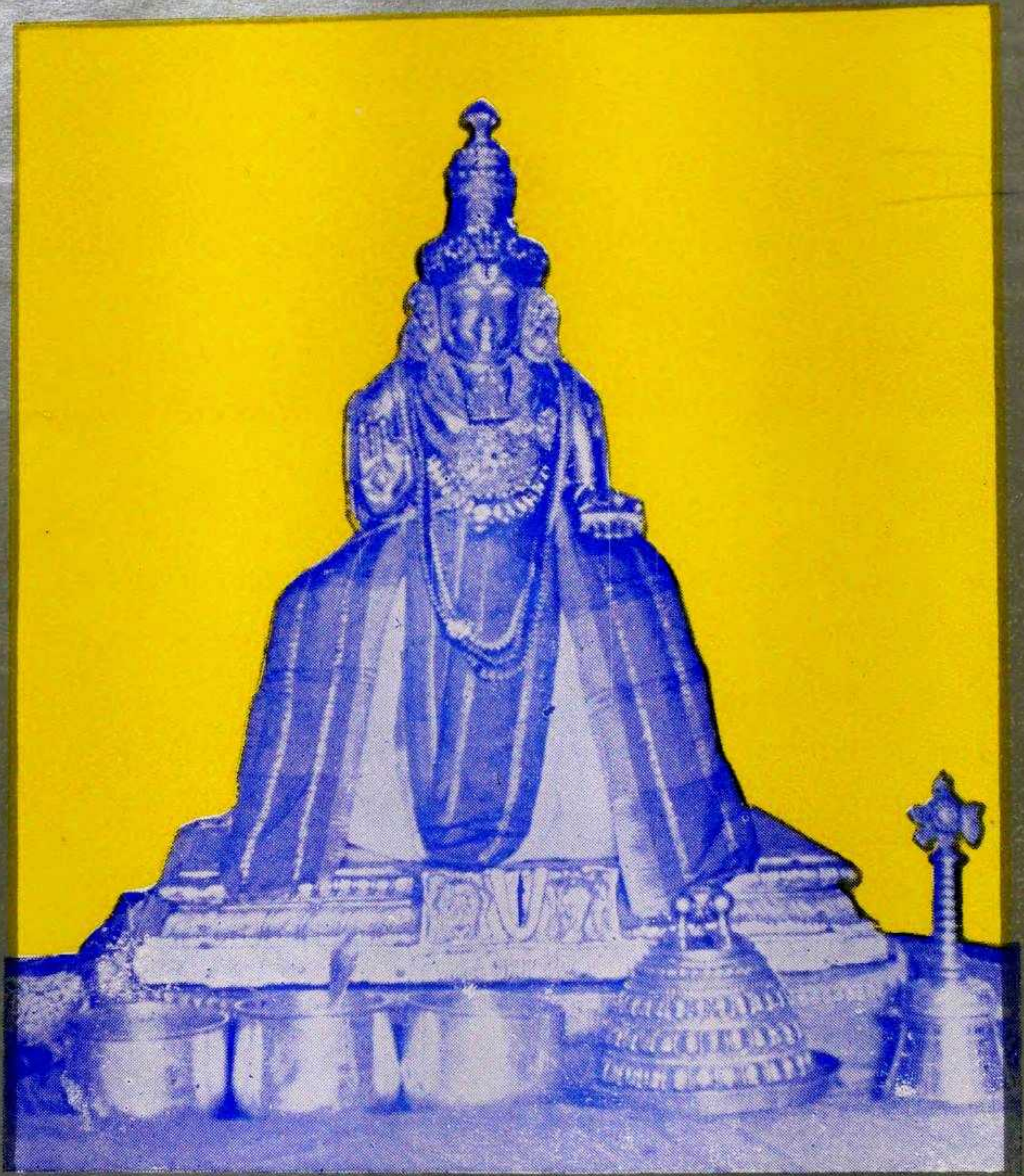
Acharya

SRI VEDANTADESIKA

(Thoopal, Vilakkodi Temple, Kanchipuram)



श्रीमान् वेङ्कटनाथार्यः कवितार्किककेसरी ।
वेदान्ताचार्यवर्यो मे संनिधत्तां सदा हृदि ॥

आम्नायमौलिगुरुणा करुणाकरेण नावातरिष्यत यदाहि भवाब्धिनावा ।
अज्ञातभक्ति जगदश्रुत सच्चरित्र सज्ञातशास्त्रमभविष्यदवैदिकं च ॥

INTRODUCTION

Sri Vedanta Desika, the great scholar and devotee, sang 108 slokas on the 'Daya' or 'Grace' aspect of Sri Srinivasa for the benefit of posterity. A reading of the Sathakam will invoke the grace of the Lord on the reader. The Devasthanam has published commentaries on the slokas in Tamil, Telugu and Kannada languages through the columns of the Bulletin. Sri D. Ramaswami Iyyengar, has helped the Devasthanam to publish the commentary in the English language as well, to serve a larger circle of devotees. His exposition and treatment of the subject matter is thought-provoking and brilliant. The flow of thought in the commentaries, coming as it does from the heart of a great devotee, is exhilarating. We are grateful to the commentator for this service of his to the bhakthas.

T. T. DEVASTHANAMS
TIRUPATI
18—11—60.

C. ANNA RAO,
Executive Officer.

FOREWORD.

I have always lamented the fact of the comparative ignorance of one of the greatest systems of religious philosophy in the world, which has been developed in South India by great saints, devotees, scholars and philosophers, namely, the *Visishtadvaita.* That system embodies some of the most beautiful concepts of the relations between man and God. One such concept is *Prapathi*, the doctrine of complete surrender to the Supreme Being. The basis for that doctrine is the conviction of the limitless mercy, kindness, and grace of the Lord, and the declaration in the Charama Sloka of the Gita. It is this quality which is glorified in the name of *dayaa*, personified as *Dayaadevi*, and extolled by one of the greatest exponents of *Visishtadvaita*, Sri Vedanta Desika, in his Daya Satakam.

The *Satakam*, as the name denotes, is a collection of hundred slokas. Sometimes the number goes up to 108 for auspicious reasons. The hundred slokas which comprise the *stotra* proper are made up of ten decads. Sri Ramaswamy Ayyangar has brilliantly demonstrated how each of the ten decads is in a different metre and deals with a distinct theme; and what is extremely significant is that the ten topics dealt with in the *stotra* are the ten topics of the famous *Dramidopanishad* (Tiruvoimozhi) of Nammalwar.

We have in Vedanta Desika a most remarkable combination of a supreme *bhaktha*, a profound scholar and a poet of the first rank. Daya Satakam reveals this versatality of his.

Sri Ramaswamy Ayyangar has fully brought out and described the fundamental truths, the powerful ideas and the lyrical beauties of the satakam.

Striking a personal note, what has appealed to me most in this *stotra* of haunting loveliness is the way in which Sri Desika develops the idea of *dayaa*, described as *Dayaadevi*, as an entity peculiarly distinct from the Lord Himself, though ultimately *dayaa* is an attribute of the Lord Himself. She is capable of even reversing the decisions of the Lord to punish. She controls the actions of the Lord, so to say. The *swaroopa* and the *roopa* of *dayaa* are sung in the 8th decad of the poem. To my mind, Dayaadevi is no other than Lakshmidevi herself, because she is the embodiment of Lord Srinivasa's mercy;

" Srinivaasasya Karunaamiva roopineem "

The concept of *dayaa* which, as I have already mentioned, is the basis of the doctrine of *prapathi*, has a vital place in the *Visishtadvaita* philosophy, which I may call as the " Religion of Dayaa." The Supreme Being is also *Dayaanidhi*. *Dayaa* is the *ichcha*, the desire, of the Lord. *Dayaa* ensures deliverance to every being.

Sri Ramaswamy Ayyangar cannot be adequately commended for the admirable way in which he has expounded the *slokas* of Sri Vedanta Desika. He could not have succeeded in his task as he has, but for the fact that he himself is a scholar, a philosopher, and a *bhaktha*.

VICTORIA CRESCENT,
MADRAS-8.
9—11—1960.

P. V. RAJAMANNAR,
Chief Justice
MADRAS HIGH COURT.

PREFACE

Even like the holy waters of the sacred Ganga pouring on the head of a lame man living far away, the Grace of Lord Srinivasa has descended on me, a very unworthy person, and enabled even me to write out a commentary on one of the finest pieces of devotional lyric given to the world by Vedanta Desika,—the Dayaa Satakam. Thanks to the help and co-operation unstintingly extended to me by the energetic and devoted Executive Officer, Sri C. Anna Rao, and the Staff of the Tirumala-Tirupati Devasthanams Press, the commentary was published in instalments in 24 consecutive issues of the Tirumala-Tirupati Devasthanams Bulletin. And now it is being issued as a separate book. It is very good of Sri C. Anna Rao to have commended the book to the worshipping public by writing out an introduction, and I thank him heartily for it.

The book has been very lucky in securing the approval and approbation of Sri P. V. Rajamannar, Chief Justice of the Madras High Court, and a reputed connoisseur of all the noble fine arts. I am very grateful to him for enriching the book by his nice foreword.

D. RAMASWAMY
Advocate.

MADRAS–7
24–11–1960

TANIANS OR INVOCATION TO THE AUTHOR.

[1] श्रीमान् वेंकटनाथार्यः कवितार्किककेसरी ।
वेदान्ताचार्यवर्यो मे सन्निधत्तां सदाहृदि ॥

Srimaan Venkata Natharyaha Kavi-tarkika-kesari ।
Vedaantacharyavaryo me Sannidattaam Sada hrdi ॥

May Sri Venkatanaatha of auspicious attributes, who is a lion among poets and logicians, and who is esteemed and revered by all as Vedaantacharya—May he ever reside and shine resplendent in my heart!

[2] रामानुज दया पात्रं ज्ञान वैराग्य भूषणम् ।
श्रीमद् वेङ्कटनाथार्यं वन्दे वेदान्त देशिकम् ॥

Raamanuja Dayaa Paatram Gnaana Vairaagya Bhooshanam ।
Srimad Venkatanaatharyam Vande Vedaanta Desikam ॥

Prostrations to Sri Venkatanaatha the Great, who is a fitting receptacle for the grace of Ramanuja, who shines adorned by Knowledge and Renunciation, (or is an ornament to knowledge and renunciation) and who is known by the honorific title of Vedanta Desika.

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(1) Before studying the great works of our ancient Acharyas, we must first offer our obeisance to the respective author of each work, and thereby obtain his grace, without which the meaning and significance of the work and its several parts cannot be properly grasped or understood. Each Acharya has got laudatory and invocatory verses sung in his honour and praise by his best disciple or by one of his followers, and they are known in Tamil as Tanians probably because they stand separately from the work proper of the author. This sloka is invariably recited by all before studying any sanskrit work of Vedanta Desika.

(2) This sloka is also a Tanian in praise of Sri Desika. This is invariably recited at the beginning of the study and chanting of the sacred Tamil verses of the Alwars, known as the 4000 Divya Prabhandams, by Desika's followers. This verse also is given here because, as will be demonstrated later, Daya Sataka contains the quintessence of Nammalwar's Tiruvoimozhi.

श्रीमते निगमान्तमहादेशिकाय नमः
श्री श्रीनिवास परब्रह्मणे नमः

॥ दयाशतकम् ॥

DAYAA SATAKAM

प्रपद्ये तं गिरिं प्रायः श्रीनिवासानुकम्पया ।
इक्षुसारस्रवन्त्येव यन्मूर्त्या शर्करायितम् ॥ (१)

Prapadye—tam—girim—prayaha Sreenivasaanukampayaa
Ikshusaara sravantyeva Yan murthyaa Sarkaariyatam ॥ (1)

I seek protection and refuge at that (famous) Hill, which is, as it were, the solidified form of Lord Srinivasa's Mercy flowing like the juice of sugarcane and becoming sugar (stone).

Dayaa Sataka as the very name signifies is a hymn of praise on (the) Mercy (of the Lord of Tiruvengadam or Venkatachala,) consisting of 100 slokas. There are 8 more slokas after the 100 slokas of the stotra proper, but that does not detract from the propriety of calling it a *sataka.* The 100 slokas are made up of ten decads (ten-sloka groups). Each decad is couched in a different meter and deals with a distinct topic as we shall see by and by.

This first decad is in the *anushtup* metre. It is really introductory and invocatory. The poet pays obeisance to, and invokes the grace of, each one of the persons of reverence mentioned in each of the first nine slokas as a preliminary to singing the praise of Daya from the 10th sloka onwards. In this first sloka he offers prostrations to the Hill itself. The Hill which is the Abode of Lord Srinivasa whose Mercy is the subject matter of the Stotra is as worshipful as the Lord Himself. Nammalwar in his Tiruvoimozhi (III. 3. 8) has sung to the effect that our sins will get destroyed by worshipping the Hill alone (திருவேங்கடமாமலை ஒன்றுமே தொழ நம்வினை ஓயுமே) The Puranas have attached very great sanctity to the Hill. Hence the poet starts the stotra with a praise of the Hill, that Hill (Tam-Girim)—which is well known and famous. The *utpreksha* (poetical fancy) is that the Hill is really a form of the Lord's Daya, even as sugar is a form of sugarcane juice. ' Sarkara ' means sugar. It also means stones or pebbles.

विगाहे तीर्थबहुलां शीतलां गुरुसन्ततिम् ।
श्रीनिवासदयाम्भोधेः परीवाहपरम्पराम ॥ (२)

Vigahe teertha bahulam Seetalam guru santatim ।
Sreenivasa dayaambodheh Pareevaaha Paramparaam ॥ (2)

I bathe in the cool and refreshing streams, full of water, which flow in uninterrupted continuity from that great reservoir which is the storage of Sreenivasa's Mercy,—the streams constituted by the heirarchy of acharyas, in whose shape the Lord's grace flows from that reservoir.

The author pays his respects to the earlier Acharyas. Every good act must be done guru-vandana-poorvakam, preceded by paying homage to the guru or Acharya. "Teertha" signifies water and also an Acharya of repute (vide teerthapaada, teerthankara) It is a *guru santathi* or heirarchy. It is 'seetalaam'—cool,—calculated to destroy our *tapa* or heat. The acharyas are here enjoyed as the overflow channels carrying the surplus water which is the Daya of the Lord. It is much easier and safer to bathe in the waters of running streams than to bathe in a deep and large lake or reservoir. The suggestion in this sloka is that acharyas are gracious personages bringing the Lord's Mercy unto us.

कृतिनः कमलावास कारुण्यैकान्तिनो भजे ।
धत्ते यत्सूक्तिरूपेण त्रिवेदी सर्वयोग्यताम् ॥ (३)

Kritinah Kamalaavasa Karunyai-kantinobhaje ।
Datte yat Sooktiroopena Trivedi Sarva Yogyatam ॥ (3)

I worship those great and blessed persons who solely rely on the Mercy of Lord Sreenivasa to the exclusion of everything else—those great persons who rendered the ancient Vedas accessible to one and all by their own works (Prabhandam.)

The Alwars are referred to in this sloka. They were the first to postulate the potency of Divine Mercy to which alone they looked up, rejecting all other forms and aids prescribed for God-realisation. Their great service to humanity lies in their rendering the meanings of the Vedas into the Tamil language and thereby making Vedic knowledge— the most relevant portion of it—available to one and all, irrespective of the caste, creed or sex differences which govern and regulate the study of those Vedas. The exclusiveness of Vedic truths was done away with by their Tamil works capable of being studied by every one—male or female, Brahmin or Non-Brahmin. Kamalaavasa signifies Sreenivasa and also a lotus tank. The Alwars have sung of the Lord as a Lotus Tank (தாமரை நீள் வாசத் தடம் : பொற்றாமரைக் கயம்). So when Desika thinks of the Alwars their reference to the Lord as a Lotus Tank comes to his mind, (vide sloka 43 of Daya Satakas *post*). And that is indeed the Lord's peculiar name in this place, Sree-nivasa. Kamala is another name for Lakshmi.

पराशरमुखान्वन्दे भगीरथनये स्थितान् ।
कमलाकान्तकारुण्य गङ्गाप्लावितमद्विधान् ॥ (४)

Paraasara mukhan vande Bhageerata naye stitaan ।
Kamalaakanta Kaarunya Gangaaplavita mad-vidaan ॥ (4)

To the great Rishis like Parasara, I offer my salutations. Only because of their indefatigable attempts, even like Bhageerata's, people like me get drenched (wet) with the Mercy of the Consort of Kamala (Lakshmi).

The Maharishis of yore, the great and earliest Seers of this Holy land, are next thought of with gratitude. Paraasara out of them has been specially mentioned as the most outstanding amongst them, as he is the author of Sri Vishnu Purana in which the various divine deeds of the Lord replete with Mercy have been elaborately dealt with. Sage Valmiki finds special mention at the end of the stotra, in the 103rd sloka.

Bhageeratha is well known for his steadfast and undaunted *tapas* by the force and efficacy of which he brought the sacred Gangaa to this earth. So too by unswerving invocations and Dhyaana or contemplation the Rishis have succeeded in making the Lord's compassion available even to us—who are as dead spiritually as the forefathers, sixty thousand in number, of Bhageerata. In the plenitude of our gratitude therefore we have to remember those great Rishis.

अशेषविघ्नशमनमनीकेश्वरमाश्रये ।
श्रीमतः करुणाम्भोधौ शिक्षास्रोत इवोत्थितम् ॥ (५)

Asesha Vignasamanam Aneekeswaram aasraye ।
Srimatah Karunaambodhau Siksha srota ivoththitam ॥ (5)

I seek shelter under the Commander-in-chief of the armies (of the Lord) who is also the destroyer of all obstacles. He is like a stream of instruction spurting out from the vast reservoir that is the Mercy of Sreeman (Lord of Lakshmi).

In the spiritual heirarchy of the Vaishnavites. Vishvaksenaa who is the Commander-in-Chief in Vaikunta of the forces of the Lord is a Nitya or eternal, even like Garuda and Ananta. But unlike them he has a place in the Guruparampara or line of acharyas next only to that of Lakshmi who in turn is next to that Primordial Teacher, Sriman Narayana. So in this sloka Desika pays his respects to him and in doing so refers very nicely to the threefold greatness that is Vishvaksenaa's. First he is the queller of all obstacles in the path of an aspirant. Next he is the chief of the Divine army. And lastly he is the originator as it were of instruction or teaching. The imparting of knowledge to another is called *siksha*. That term has acquired a secondary meaning of ' punishment ' which is intimately associated with that term now. Even the secondary meaning is in Desika's mind. For not only is Vishvaksena the foremost of teachers but he is also a pedagogue with a birch or cane in his hand. It is called ' vetra ' and symbolises punishment or chastisement.

The imparting of knowledge is an aspect of Daya or God's Mercy. That has been very beautifully indicated here by suggesting that the stream of *siksha* (teaching) takes its origin from the big lake of Daya.

The Smarthas and Saivites look up to Vighneswara for removing obstacles in the path of the observance of righteous and religious ceremonies. Vighneswara will, taken strictly, mean the Lord of obstacles. It is only by inference that it must be taken that he is one who protects us from obstacles by removing them. Desika can be seen to refer here to Vishvaksena as being *Vigna-samana*. At the same time his *Eeswaratvam* is also there. He is *Aneekeswara.*

समस्तजननीं वन्दे चैतन्यस्तन्यदायिनीम् ।
श्रेयसीं श्रीनिवासस्य करुणामिव रूपिणीम् ॥ (६)

Samasta Jananeem Vande Chaitanya stanya daayineem ।
Sreyaseem Sreenivasasya Karunam Iva Roopineem ॥ (6)

I bow before the Mother of all, who feeds every one with the milk of knowledge, who is the bestower of greatness and who is the embodiment, as it were, of Lord Sreenivasa's mercy.

After paying obeisance to Sri Vishvaksena, the poet in this sloka pays his respects to Sri Mahalakshmi. She is referred to as the Mother of all. Just as the ordinary mother feeds her babes with her breast milk, Lakshmi the Divine Consort of the Lord feeds everyone with the milk of knowledge. *Stanya* means breast milk. Here it is in the form of *chaitanya* or knowledge. The word *Sreenivaasasya* in the third pada has been very cleverly placed so as to be taken along with the previous word and also with the succeeding words. She is *Sreyaseem Sreenivasasya*, meaning thereby the cause for His superiority and excellence. She is also *Sreenivasasya karunamiva roopinee*—the embodiment of the Mercy of Srinivasa. This idea of Lakshmi being the "*roopinee*" or the alter ego of *karuna* or compassion is a topic very frequently dealt with in the course of this stotra.

वन्दे वृषगिरीशस्य महिषीं विश्वधारिणीम् ।
तत्कृपाप्रतिघातानां क्षमया वारणं यया ॥ (७)

Vande Vrishigireesasya Mahisheem Visvadharineem ।
Tat Krpa pratighaatanaam Kshamayaa Vaaranam Yayaa ॥ (7)

I prostrate before Mother Earth (Bhoomi Devi) who is the Consort of the Lord of Vrishagiri (another name for Venkatachala) who by Her trait of forgiveness removes all obstacles to the flow of His grace.

In this sloka the author pays his respects to the Consort of Lord Srinivasa who occupies a seat on His left just as Mahalakshmi occupies a seat on His right. The *Ubhayanachiars* (*Nancharlu*) on either side of Sri Malayappa Swami on the Hills are Sri Devi on His right and Bhoodevi on His left. Lakshmi symbolises Mercy and it is in that aspect the poet paid his respects to Her in the previous sloka. The Lord who is also the law-giver for the entire world is more often than not seized with a feeling of anger at the transgressions which we mortals in our ignorance are very often guilty of. This anger is a serious obstacle to the flow of mercy. It is the funcuion of Bhoodevi to remove this obstacle by Kshama (forgiveness), which makes the Lord put up with all our sins and thereby helps us to obtain His mercy. It is this quality of Kshama, which Bhoodevi stands for and symbolises, and inculcates in the Lord. So She is pictured here as the remover of the obstacles in the way of the flow of Daya. It was the function of Vishwaksena to remove the obstacles in the way of our seeking God and approaching Him in all humility for help. When we go there we are assured by Lakshmi of His grace or Krpa which She stands for. The possibility of any barrier in the way of that grace reaching us is removed by Bhoodevi. Viswa-dhaarini means the supporter of all (everything). It also indicates one who patiently suffers and puts up with everything—*Sarvam-Saha*. That is Bhoodevi.

निशामयतु मां नीला यद्भोगपटलैर्ध्रुवम् ।
भावितं श्रीनिवासस्य भक्तदोषेष्वदर्शनम् ॥ (८)

Nisaamayathu maam Neela Yat bhogapatalayr-dhruvam ।
Bhavitam Sreenivaasasya Bhakta dosheshu-adarsanam. ॥ (8)

May Neela Devi turn her glances on me. It is only by virtue of the screen she draws, as it were, in front of Lord Sreenivasa by her amorous endearments, that that Lord pretends not to see the errors (faults and sins) of His devotees.

The Vaishnavites associate three chief Devis as the Consorts of the Lord. Lakshmi and Bhoodevi among them are well known. Neela Devi, however, is not so well known, except to very close students of Sri Vaishnava Sampradaya. When the Lord came down to this earth as Lord Sri Krishna, Lakshmi took the form of Rukmini, Neela took the form of Satyabhama. In Tamil, Neela is known as Nappinnai (Vide 18th Verse of Tiruppavai). She is the same as Satyabhama of the Srimad Bhagavatha. The part Neela plays in coming to the help of the seekers after the Lord's grace is very nicely put in this sloka by the author of this Stotra. The Lord's fondness towards her makes Him blind to the sins of His votaries. The analogy used is from Vaidya Sastra. *Patalaa* is what is now known as cataract in the eye. Those who are given to sexual excesses, it is believed in Ayurveda, get cataract.

To a man afflicted by cataract in the eye, vision gets affected and he is not able to see well. This is said to happen in the case of the Lord here. The *adarsanatvam* (non-seeing) in regard to the faults of Bhaktas is attributed to the *Patala* or screen caused by Neela's *bhoga* or endearing enjoyment. That the poet is here referring to a great truth in very ordinary language will be clear from the use of the word *Bhaavitam.* It is only a pretence. It is not a constitutional defect or affliction but it is a put-on state-of-affairs. One is reminded of the name *Avignata* अविज्ञाता in the Sahasranama given to the Lord by that Grand Old Sire, Bheeshmaa. *Avignata* literally means one who does not know.

This is the only sloka of the 108 slokas of the Daya Sataka in which there is no mention of Daya. In all the other 107 slokas invariably Daya finds a place,—mentioned in some places as Daya, in other places as Karuna, Krpa or Anukampa. This is a very naive way of suggesting that there is need on our part to invoke the Lord's grace only because of our sins being taken note of by the Lord.

कमप्यनवधिं वन्दे करुणावरुणालयम् ।
वृषशैलतटस्थानां स्वयं व्यक्तिमुपागतम् ॥ (९)

Kamapyanavadhim Vande Karunaa Varunaalayam ।
Vrishasaila-tatastaanaam Swayam Vyaktim upaagatam. ॥ (9)

I adore that indescribable and limitless ocean of Mercy (Lord Sreenivasa) which is self-revelatory to those who (take their) stand on (the shore known as) Vrishasaila (i.e., Tirumala).

After paying his respects to the Hill, the Acharyas, the Alwars, the Maharishis, to Vishwaksena, Mahalakshmi Bhoodevi and Neela Devi respectively, the poet now offers his *Vandana* or worship to Lord Srinivasa Himself, as a prelude to praising Daya from the next sloka. This (ninth) sloka is the only sloka in praise of the Lord Himself. His name occurs in every sloka of this stotra but not in this which describes Him only as an ocean of mercy. The two *viseshanas* (adjectives) used here are *Kamapi* and *Anavadhim.* The first indicates His greatness that is beyond words. The second refers to His immeasurability. *Avadhi* is boundary or limit and is used both in regard to space and time. *Anavadhim* here therefore indicates one who is unlimited by space or time.

In the second half of the sloka reference is made to this Lord of Tirumala as a Swayam-vyakta (self-revealed). There are several forms of archas or idols. The most important among them is Swayam Vyakta where the Lord of His own will takes a form—unlike other cases where in response to prayers or requests from Siddhas, Devas or men He graciously descends into an archa form, referred to as Saiddha, Daiva, and Maanusha, respectively. That Tirumala is a Swayam-Vyakta-stala is well known and several Puranas speak about it.

The word 'Tatasta' means" one who takes his stand on," and also " one who stands on the shore." The suggestion in the latter meaning is that the ocean is fathomable only by those who do not attempt to get into it. The Upanishadic saying 'Vignaatam Avijaanataam' is brought to our minds by this suggestion. He will not reveal Himself to those who think they can by their efforts fathom His greatness. But to those who stay on the shore in the feeling that He is unfathomable, He shows himself. Of course to those who go to Tirumala He is there revealing Himself to them of His own accord (Swayam).

अकिंचननिधिं सूतिमपवर्गत्रिवर्गयोः ।
अञ्जनाद्रीश्वरदयामभिष्टौमि निरञ्जनाम् ॥ (१०)

Akinchana Nidhim Sootim Apavargatrivargayoho ।
Anjanaadreeswara Dayaam Abishtowmi Niranjanaam, ॥ (10)

I praise the Daya (or Grace) of Anjanaadreeswara (the Lord of the Anjana Hill) who is the treasure (stored up wealth) for helpless and hapless persons, and who is the bestower of Moksha as well as Dharma, Artha and Kama, and who is free from all fault or blemish.

From this sloka the praise of Daya Devi regularly starts. This is also indicated by the *Kriyaa-pada* (predicate) used here—Abhistowmi. The poet's pratigna (प्रतिज्ञ) or determination is to praise, adequately and well, Daya Devi. She is referred to as the Daya of Anjanaadreeswara. Anjanaadri is one of the several names of Vengadam. The Puranas have it that Anjana Devi (mother of Aanjaneya) performed penance on this Hill for getting a son and hence the Hill is known as Anjanaadri. The Lord of the Hill is Anjanaadreeswara. His Daya is the subject of praise in this Stotra.

Three aspects of Daya are pointedly referred to in this sloka. The first is that She is the sole help and succour for all those who are helpless. The beginning words are *Akinchana Nidhim*. *Kinchana* denotes something, a very small minute and insignificant something. Akinchana means one not possessing even that trifling something. That is to say one who is absolutely bereft of everything. *Nidhi* denotes a vast treasure or stored up wealth lying buried in the earth or otherwise hidden from view. The first and foremost quality of Daya is that she is the refuge for the helpless.

The second attribute referred to here is that Daya is the bestower of *Apavarga* or Moksha, and not only that, but also the three other purushaarthas—Dharma, Artha and Kaama, compendiously referred to as Trivarga. Though in the normal order of enumeration of the four *purushaarthas*, Moksha comes last, here among Daya's gifts it is mentioned first. Daya wants to confer on us all Moksha or release from Samsara and residence in the Celestial Abode of Bliss. But our desire for moksha is not there and we desire the other three purusharthas only. Even those three she confers on us though not so gladly and willingly. In the eighth decad, especially in the 75th sloka, of this stotra, the poet will be showing to us how Daya utilises the several gifts in Her power as baits to confer on us everlasting bliss.

The last trait referred to is Daya's blemishlessness. The word ' Anjana ' means collyrium (the black paste that is applied to the eyes by females especially) and also fault or blemish. The *rasokti* here is that while she is the Consort of Anjanaadreeswara she has not a bit of *anjana* herself. The great truth brought out by this seeming *sabda-virodha* (apparent contradiction in words) is that even if the Lord cannot be said to be faultless. Daya Devi is indeed entirely faultless. He is a law-giver and as such cannot be expected to quietly put up with those who transgress the law. To us erring mortals that is a flaw in Him. It is only the attribute of Mercy in Him that saves Him and saves us. This aspect is elaborated in the later slokas.

श्रीमते निगमान्तमहादेशिकाय नमः

श्री श्रीनिवास परब्रह्मणे नमः

॥ दयाशतकम् ॥

DAYAA SATAKAM

SECOND DECAD.

Introduction.

FROM the 11th sloka to the 20th, the metre employed is what is known as *Geeti*. This, like the well known *Aarya*, is a metre regulated not by syllables or *aksharaas*, but by *maatraas* or syllabic instants. A change of the metre for every ten slokas studiedly employed by a poet is an indication to the readers that there is a change of topic with every change of metre. For the ten decads of this Stotra proper, the ten topics of *Dramidopanishad* (Nammalwar's Tiruvoimozhi) as summarised by Desika himself in his *Dramidopanishad Saaram* and *Dramidopanishad Taatparya Ratnaavali* have been adopted as the topics. Accordingly "*Sevaa Yogyatwam*" was the topic of the first decad. *Sevaa Yogyatwam* means 'worship-worthiness.' God is *Sevaa Yogya* because He has Tirumalai as His abode, because He is sought after by Acharyas, Alwars and Maharishis, because He is served by Vishvaksena, and surrounded by Sri Devi, Bhoodevi, and Neela Devi, and because He is himself an ocean of grace, mercy, compassion and sympathy towards all.

The topic of the second decad is "ati-bhogyatwa" or the exceedingly enjoyable quality of God. The slokas of this decad while dealing with the greatness of Daya, each in its own way, are collectively calculated to emphasise how God is sweet and enjoyable to His devotees. Praise of Dayaa—a quality of God—is really praise of the Dayaa-van दयावान् the possessor of Daya.

अनुचरशक्त्यादिगुणामग्रेसरबोधविरचितालोकाम् ।
स्वाधीनवृषगिरीशां स्वयं प्रभूतां प्रमाणयामि दयाम् ॥ (११)

Anuchara Saktyaadi gunaam Agresara bodha virachitaa-lokaam ।
Swaadheena Vrishagireesam Swayamprabhootaam Pramaanayaami Dayaam ॥ (11)

I swear by Daya, who has Shakti and other attributes (of the Lord) as her retinue (followers), who has her path lighted (illuminated) by Gnana going ahead, who wields full sway over Vrishagireesa (Lord Srinivasa), and who is by herself immense and immeasurable.

No sooner than the Poet said that he was going to praise Daya Devi, we find Dayadevi herself sallying forth.

This sloka describes Dayadevi as starting out in all glory in response, as it were, to the poet's desire to praise her, expressed in the previous verse. Even before one full sloka is uttered in her praise, she descends and condescends to show herself. Her *saulabhya* or easy accessibility is apparent from this.

Those who have seen processions of the Lords in Temples will have noticed how the Lord is preceded by several paraphernalia and followed by others. Here the poet describes *Gnana* as preceding Daya and the other attributes, *Shakti*, *Bala* etc., as following her.

Six attributes or gunas are usually associated with the term "Bhagavan." They are *gnana*, *bala*, *aisvarya*, *veerya*, *shakti* and *tejas*. Out of them Desika speaks of *gnana* as going before Daya, and the other five as following in her wake. As is the case with all *utprekshas* (poetical fancies) of Desika, a very great truth underlies this poetic description of Dayadevi's procession. Knowledge must go in front and indicate where Daya is to function. In so functioning, Daya is backed up by the other five attributes without whose support the protection afforded by Daya will not be complete or effective. So they are described as *anucharaas* or followers.

Daya is itself an attribute of the Lord. As we shall see later, Desika postulates the supremacy of Daya over all His other numerous attributes. In this sloka, the chief six attributes (*shad-gunas*) are shown as helping Daya in her mission of bringing relief, redress, and redemption, to suffering humanity.

'*Aaloka*' means light, lustre, brightness. Here that brightness is brought about by *gnana* which is described as going in front of Daya. When great personages walk in public, an attendant holding a torch or a lamp shows the way in front, often also exclaiming, 'This way,' 'This way.'

By referring to Daya as "*Svaadheena-vrishagireesaa*" the poet shows to us how completely Lord Srinivasa is under Daya's sway or control. Her purpose is so noble and is so much after the Lord's own heart that He, so to say, surrenders Himself unto her. The manner and the measure in which He does so is the theme of several later slokas. This surrender is born not out of fear or subordination, but out of a spirit of harmony (Aikarasya ऐकरस्य in regard to the object in view.

Lest one should think that the greatness of Daya is entirely due to her being the consort of the Lord, the poet adds, "*svayam prabhootam*," conveying to us thereby that by herself she is immense and supreme.

The word 'pramaanayaami' in this sloka is not easy to understand. *Pramana* is authority and hence validity. The poet evidently intends to establish the validity of Daya. This term has also been taken to mean a 'measure.' In that view we have to take it that Desika says that in singing this Stotra in her praise he is really attempting to measure the immeasurable. Another meaning, if permissible, will also be very apt. Till Desika wrote the Dayaasataka there was no textual authority postulating the supremacy of Daya. It may not be an exaggerated claim to make that for the *prameya* (object of knowledge) of Daya, Daya Sataka is the *pramaana*,—(authority).

अपि निखिललोकसुचरितमुष्टिंधयदुरितमूर्च्छनाजुष्टम् ।
संजीवयतु दये मामञ्जनगिरिनाथरञ्जनी भवती ॥ (१२)

Api nikhila loka sucharitamushtindhaya durita moorchanaajushtam
Sanjeevayati daye maam anjanagirinaatha ranjanee bhavatee. (12)

Daya Devi! Acting in a manner very pleasing to the Lord of Anjanagiri (Lord Srinivasa), you revive and restore me to life from a state of stupor into which I was plunged by my sins which are powerful enough to devour at one gulp all the virtuous deeds of the entire world.

From this sloka onwards the Poet addresses Daya and all the slokas are couched in the second person. Desika in this sloka says with a great sense of thankfulness that while he had swooned away under the vast load of his sins, Daya took pity on him and restored him to consciousness. To the devout, living in sin with no thought for God, is death. From that state Daya redeems human souls. Most modestly, Desika refers to himself as one such, so redeemed and restored to life. *Sanjeevanam* means giving life. The heavy load of sin smothers one's own existence and brings about a state akin to death. Just as some famous *oshadhis* (herbs)bring back to life those who are almost dead, Daya revives us.

The sins committed by us must be felt by us to be big enough o devour, or to use a slightly different metaphor, consume, all the good deeds done by all else throughout the whole world. *Mushtindhaya* signifies sipping from one's own fist or palm and swallowing n one gulp, as Sage Agasthya did with the seven seas. Our sins are so vast that they can devour and reduce to nothing all the *ukrita* (good deeds) and all the *sucharita* (good conduct) of the whole world taken together. They reduce us to a state akin to death, and yet from that state of *moorchana* or stupor, we are evived by Daya.

There is a *paata* पाठ or reading for this sloka in which *sanjeevavatu* takes the place of *sanjeevayati*. In that *paata* the meaning s 'May Daya revive me.'

Daya is referred to in this sloka as *anjanagirinaatha ranjanee* which means one who delights *Anjanagirinaatha* (Srinivasa). It may be that it is because she is so dear to the Lord that she is able to infuse life into our dead and dormant selves. Or it may be that she is so very dear to the Lord because she gives us life.

This sloka is regarded as a great Mantra. Acharyas have prescribed its '*aavritti*' (repetition) to their disciples as a panacea for several ills that beset the latter in their progress, material or spiritual.

भगवति दये भवत्या वृषगिरिनाथे समाप्लुते तुङ्गे ।
अप्रतिघमज्जनानां हस्तालम्बो मदाघसां मृग्यः ॥ (१३)

Bhagavati Daye! bhavatyaa Vrishagirinaathe samaaplute tunge ।
Apratighamajjanaanaam hastaalambo madaaghasaam mrigyaha.॥ (13)

Glorious Dayadevi! When even the high and lofty Lord of Vrishagiri floats in the flood caused by you, my sins which inescapably get drowned will have to seek in vain for a helping hand to come to their rescue (and lift them up).

While in the preceding sloka the Poet dealt with his having been rescued and revived, in this he talks about the submerging (and consequent extinction) of his sins. Daya is likened to a flood, an analogy in which the poet revels often in the course of this Stotra. It is such a big and huge flood that it sweeps even the high-placed Lord off His feet. This sloka shows that the re-vivification brought about by Daya as mentioned in the previous sloka is the effect of the extinction of our sins.

Apratighamajjana refers to a submerging that cannot be warded off. Before Daya, sins cannot help perishing. Sins produce adverse effect on us, because of the Lord punishing us for them. But when the Lord Himself is drenched by Daya, He pardons all our sins and so, by failing to have effect,—in the only way they can ever have any effect,—they perish.

The Lord is *Tunga* or high-placed, lofty. If one at a great height is submerged what is to be said of others who are in the lower levels? They inescapably get drowned. That is the fate which overtakes our sins, since the flood level of Daya is sufficient to engulf the lofty Lord Himself. *Hastaalamba* is lending a helping hand. The punishing mood of the Lord being banished by the intervention of Daya, sins get no quarter and so are spoken of as getting drowned.

कृपणजनकल्पलतिकां कृतापराधस्य निष्क्रियामाद्याम् ।
वृषगिरिनाथदये त्वां विदन्ति संसारतारिणीं विबुधाः ॥ (१४)

Kripana jana kalpalatikaam Kritaaparaadhasya nishkriyaam aadyaam।
Vrishagirinaatha Daye! tvaam vidanti samsaarataarineem
vibhudaaha. ॥ (14)

O Daya of Vrishagirinaatha! you are the Kalpaka Tree (capable of bestowing everything that is desired) to helpless persons (who have nothing to fall back on). You are the pre-eminent expiation for those who have committed heinous crimes. Therefore the learned realise that you are the sole aid to cross the sea of Samsara.

Having dealt with the capacity of Daya to restore us to life by ridding us from the evil effects of our sins in the previous two slokas, the poet in this sloka postulates the efficacy of Daya in redeeming us from Samsara.

The Kalpaka tree is a tree which is believed to be capable of granting all boons desired by those who go underneath it and ask for them. That mythical tree is in Paradise and is useful only to the Devas. But Daya is a similar tree on earth and is capable of fulfilling the desires of *Kripanaas*, helpless and wretched beings. The next idea brings out Daya's greatness even better. She is *Nishkriyam aadyam*. Nishkriya is atonement or expiation. A sinner to get cleared of a sin committed by him has to perform certain expiatory ceremonies. Daya effects the cleansing from sins without resort to such expiations, and so she is said to be the first and foremost, or rather, the pre-eminent and most potent; form of expiation.

Owing to these two great and helpful qualities of hers, Daya Devi is relied on as the sole refuge by those who seek release from Samsara; and that is what the latter half of the sloka says. Those well versed in Sastras have discovered and laid down that to the helpless, Daya is the only help, and to the sinner, Daya is the ole expiation. Therefore she alone can help us to cross the ocean of Samsara in which we are now drifting on a frail boat without a rudder. With her help we are sure of crossing that ocean.

वृषगिरिगृहमेधिगुणाः बोधबलैश्वर्यवीर्यशक्तिमुखाः ।
दोषा भवेयुरेते यदिनाम दये त्वया विनाभूताः ॥ (१५)

Vrishagiri grihamedhi gunaaha ***Boda*** *balaiswarya veeryashakti mukaaha* ।
Doshaa bhaveyurete Yadinaama daye tvayaa vinabhootaha. ॥ (15)

The *Gunas* **(attributes) of the great Householder residing in Vrishagiri (Tirumala), such as knowledge, strength, supremacy, prowess, energy etc.,—these will all become** *Doshaas* **or demerits if only you were not there; (i.e., if they are bereft of association with you).**

Desika is very fond of referring to the Lord as a *grihamedhi*, a householder following the *grihastaasrama dharma* in the company of His wife. At the end of Raghuveera Gadya, Rama with Sita by Him is described as a householder with a huge family consisting of sons and grandsons like Brahma, Siva and so on. In the first sloka of his Yatiraja Saptati, Desika refers to *Kamalaagrihamedhi* (Sreenivasa) as the primordial guru or preceptor. Here we see him similarly describing Lord Sreenivasa of Vrishagiri as a *grihamedhi*

It is a well known fact that all the three other *aasramites,*— the *Brahmachari*, the *Vaanaprasta* and the *Sanyasi*, have to look up to the *Grihasta* for help. So a *grihasta* must be one possessed of good, hospitable and protecting qualities. The Lord has innumerable qualities among which six are very well known and referred to as *shad-gunaas* as already noticed. This sloka tells us that all of them are *gunaas* only because of their being associated with Daya, and that if only Daya was not also an attribute of the Lord they will really be *doshaas* or blemishes in Him. The poet's intendment is clear. To us sinners, no attribute of the Lord is helpful except Daya. Backing up Daya, the other attributes save us and protect us. But left to function without Daya, all those qualities will engage themselves in acts prejudicial to us, because we are sinners. Knowledge will be useful to take note of all our transgressions. The other qualities will all help in securing for us the punishment we deserve. So from our point of view, instead of shining as bright and protecting qualities, they will act for our destruction and so to us they will appear as blemishes and not otherwise. It is only when those other qualities act as handmaids to Daya Devi, as described in the 11th sloka, we feel we are safe, and praise the Lord as a *gunavaan*, a good-natured person.

‘ *Doshaa* ’ also means night or darkness of the night. The suggestion evidently is that without Daya all the other qualities will be shrouded in darkness, and will not shine as they do in her presence.

Yadi-naama (if only) has been used to convey the idea that an impossible state of affairs is being envisaged. For, the Lord is always a God of Mercy and where is the chance of Daya being absent?

This sloka is the first of several others in this stotra which aim at postulating the supremacy of Daya over all the other qualities of the Lord, a supremacy that makes her ‘ Guneswari ’ (गुणेश्वरि) (in sloka 101 post) meaning ‘ Empress among the *gunaas*.

[*Readers will have noticed how in all the first five slokas of this second decad the term used is uniformly ‘ Daya.’ In the next five slokas it will be seen that the term ‘ Karuna ’ is invariably used in all of them. It will be a nice subject for study by scholars and savants what the exact meaning and connotation of each of the four words Daya, Karuna, Kripa, and Anukampa, which Desika employs in this stotra, are. We can gtve rough English equivalents for each of them thus* Daya = Mercy ; Karuna = Pity, Compassion ; Kripa = Grace; Anukampa = Sympathy.]

आसृष्टिसंततानामपराधानां निरोधिनीं जगतः ।
पद्मासहायकरुणे प्रतिसंचरकेलिमाचरसि ॥ (१६)

Aasrishti santataanaam Aparaadhaanaam nirodhineem jagataha ।
Padmaasahaaya Karune Pratisanchara Kelimaacharasi. ॥ (16)

O! Daya of the Consort of Padmavati! With a view to put a stop to the sins and errors of the creatures of the world which have been continually committed ever since creation, you bring about pralaya (dissolution of the universe) in a sportful mood, even like the retreat of a danseuse from the front to the rear of the stage.

The full import of this sloka can be understood only by persons well versed in Bharata-Shastra, or the science of dancing. *Pratisanchara* means 'moving backwards.' As a *Keli* (play or sport) is referred to, the moving backwards during dancing is what the poet is alluding to. The dissolution of the world at the end of a Kalpa (a long period of time made up of several yugas) is also a 'moving back'; hence the word '*pratisanchara*' has come to denote *pralaya* itself.

This *pralaya* is described in this sloka as an act of Daya, that is to say, it is an act of mercy on the part of the Lord. In the next sloka, creation is going to be described as an act of mercy too. But the Chetanas who are all given a body each at the time of creation and projected into the world for working out their redemption, fail to do so. Instead they get into evil ways in thought word and deed. If you give a person a boat to cross a stream and if you find that instead of crossing the stream the man floats down the stream allowing himself to be carried along by the current to certain destruction, do you not wish that you had never given him the boat? So too Daya Devi who was responsible for giving souls a body for working out their redemption, finds that with the help of the very body each soul is drifting into greater and greater depths of sinfulness and she cries halt to the world-process and brings about *pralaya*. This is the central idea of the poet in describing *pralaya* as a sport of Daya Devi.

In the analogy of dancing, a danseuse (ballet dancer) starts *abhinaya* of a particular *Padam*. But after a time she finds that things are not shaping as they ought to. The orchestra supplying the background music, the songster who has to sing the padam, the drummer who is to keep time,—between them there is no co-ordination and no unison. *Laya* or symphony is disturbed. *Taala* goes out of hand. Stepping becomes faulty. The poor woman when she discovers that the several discordant features cannot be mended to enable her to carry on her *abhinaya* according to schedule, determines to end the same, and moves backward *pratisanchara* in as decent and respectable a style as possible. This is exactly what Daya Devi does when she brings about Pralaya. It is a matter for students of the science of Natya Sastra to see if the several words employed in the first half of the sloka convey any special meaning or significance in that Sastra. If they do, much light will certainly be thrown upon the interpretation of this sloka and its significance as applied to *pralaya.* No one without a proficiency in all the sciences and arts can hope to fully understand Desika's works.

अचिदविशिष्टान्प्रलये जन्तूनवलोक्य जातनिर्वेदा ।
करणकलेबरयोगं वितरसि वृषशैलनाथकरुणे त्वम् ॥ (१७)

Achidavisishtaanpralaye jantoon avalokya jaata nirveda ।
Karana kalebara yogam vitarasi Vrishasailanaatha Karune tvam.॥ (17)

O! Daya of Vrishagirinaatha! Disgusted and depressed at the sight of creatures existing, during pralaya, in a state of non-differentiation from inert and senseless matter, you graciously associate them with (*i.e.*, confer on them) sense organs and a body.

Kaaranam-tu-dhyeaha कारणं तु ध्येयः is the Upanishadic mandate. "Reflect upon that which is the ultimate cause." The Brahma Sutras start with defining Brahman as "That from which creation etc. emanate." Desika establishes in and by the previous sloka and this, the great and important part that Daya Devi plays in regard to Creation and *Pralaya.* Though it is usual to mention Creation or *Srishti* before destruction or *Pralaya* Desika has deliberately sung about *pralaya* first because without mentioning that state one cannot fully understand the process of creation in the way Desika wants us to understand it—vide the use of the word 'pralaye' प्रलये meaning "during pralaya" in this sloka.

Jagat-kaaranatvam or being the cause of creation (of this world) is attributed to Daya in this sloka. Her deed it is in truth and fact, though to everyone it appears to be the Lord's (sloka 69 post). The suggestion is that the Lord creates the world only because he is impelled by Daya to do so.

During *pralaya* the entire world consisting of jeevas who are sentient beings and prakriti which is non-sentient matter is in a very subtle (*sookshma*) state. To all intents and purposes the jeevas are like achit (nonsentient matter). They cannot be distinguished from that achit. A sense of *nirveda* (disgust and consequent depression) creeps over Daya and she makes up her mind to put an end to that deplorable state of affairs and the result is creation.

What is creation but the union of a soul with a body and the sense organs? This union or *yoga* gives to each soul or jeeva a body and the sense organs. Karanam करणं primarily means acting, action; and so Karanaas are the instruments aiding one in action. They are thus the organs of sense which are the five Gnanendriyas (The five Karmendhriyas are to be grouped with the body which is referred to in this sloka as *Kalebara*). Karana oftentimes denotes the three faculties of mind, speech and action मनोवाक्काय.

When the jeeva is associated with a *Karana* and a *Kalebara* it gets the power to think and act. Daya invests the jeeva or individual soul with this power so that it may get out of the wretched state in which it was during pralaya and work out its own salvation by thinking, acting and functioning in such a manner that it is able to achieve redemption from the endless cycle of births and deaths by invoking the Lord's Daya in one of the prescribed modes (upayas) and attaining salvation. That is the purpose of creation.

On the surface it may appear that if *pralaya* or dissolution is Daya Karya or the work of Daya, *srishti* or creation cannot also be said to be the work of Daya—and vice versa. But a little reflection will show to us that by creation some jeevas will have been enabled to attain the goal of existence, *i.e.*, salvation, though by far the majority of jeevas may by their failure to walk in the path of virtue, land themselves in sin and more sin. Then again even if we consider the case of sinners alone, by *pralaya* which is brought about after millions of years, their sinningness and the proclivity to go on sinning will be arrested. The potentiality for committing sin is like the momentum of a moving body. When motion is arrested the momentum disappears though the body remains. It is like imprisoning a truant boy within the house when on the pretence of going to school, he consistently misbehaves elsewhere. After a time the parents feel the punishment must have corrected him or at least removed his evil proclivity and send him to school again. That is creation properly understood and there is no inconsistency in *pralaya* and *srishti* both being the work of Daya.

As already hinted at, the use of the word Karuna in these slokas indicates that taking pity and compassion at our pitiable state, Daya Devi acts in that particular manner.

अनुगुणदशार्पितेन श्रीधरकरुणे समाहितस्नेहा ।
शमयसि तमः प्रजानां शास्त्रमयेन स्थिरप्रदीपेन ॥ (१८)

Anuguna dasaarpitena Sridhara Karune samaahita snehaa ।
Samayasi tamaprajaanam saastramayena stira pradeepena. ॥ (18)

O! Daya of Sridhara! you dispel the darkness of your children by the constant and unflickering lamp of Sastras which consists of a suitably knit wick (of threads) and is ever full of oil.

The poet employs *Slesha*-alamkara in this sloka to very effectively indicate the meaning he wants to convey. *Slesha* means pun or the employment of words conveying more meanings than one, all of such meanings being intended. Thus the Shastras are referred to as a Lamp. For a lamp there must be a wick which burns and gives light. There must be a regular supply of oil which is drawn through the wick and made incandescent. Such a lamp will dispel darkness. A fond mother will light such a lamp and keep it lit for the benefit and safety of her children. This is one meaning.

The other one referring to Shastras is as follows:—Daya abounds in *sneha* or fondness towards all human beings (Prajaas) She lits the lamp of Shastra in the mind when it is in a proper and fit state (anuguna dasa). By this glowing lamp, avidya (ignorance) is dispelled. Shastras are ' stira pradeepas,' constant and one-pointed, never swerving or flickering.

One upanishad says that the Lord first created the four-faced Brahma to project this world into being and at once gave to him the Vedas. This sloka refers to that. The Vedas are the lamps, the lamps of knowledge, without which the created beings will merely flounder like men thrown into a pitch-dark pit.

A lamp burns only because of the oil. It is a piece of consummate art on the part of Desika to describe Daya as the oil. She is the real and true inspiration to progress. *Sneha* means oil and also affection and love. Daya's affection towards us is well known and is described here as samaahita, full.

In sloka 46 post, the poet is going to refer to this *Sastra-pradanaa* by employing another analogy.

रूढा वृषाचलपतेः पादे मुखकान्तिपत्रलच्छाया ।
करुणे सुखयसि विनतान्कटाक्षविटपैः करापचेयफलैः ॥ (१९)

Rooda vrishaachalapatehpaade Mukhakaanti patralachchaaya ।
Karune! *sukhayasi vinataan Kataaksha vitapai* (*h*) *Karaapacheya*
palaihi. ॥ (19)

Daya Devi! Taking your origin at the feet of Vrishaachalapati, you grow up (like a Kalpaka tree) and gladden those who (seek shelter under you) bend down in all humility, by green and cool facial shades (glow) and by fruits that can be plucked by hand from the lovely branches of Kataaksha, glances.

In this sloka Daya is again likened to a Kalpaka tree (vide Sloka 14 above). She emanates from (has her roots in) Lord Srinivasa's feet. Daya is available only to those who seek succour at the Lord's feet. On those who thus bend themselves and pay obeisance to those feet she lavishes all boons and benefits. A tree will have pleasant and lovely green shades to gladden weary travellers who seek shelter under it. So too there is the beautiful and exceedingly pleasing sight of the Lord's face which is cool and green, for is He not like a green emerald in colour? A tree will have plenty of fruits. This Kalpaka tree also has plentiful of fruits which are the fourfold purusharthas—Dharma, Artha, Kama and Moksha. The fruits will hang from boughs or branches. Here the Kataaksha or gracious glances of the Lord are the boughs from which the *purushartas* have to be got (plucked). Fruits at a very great height are not easily obtainable. But the fruits in this tree are easy of reach, but only to those who bend. This is a peculiar tree from which fruits can be obtained only by those who bend and are humble. Be he a dwarf or a patagonian he can get this fruit only if he bends (*vinata*). Eleswhere Desika himself has stated that whether one be lofty or lowly one can get these fruits only by being a (pranata) bent and humbled being. 'Yatra tungai (h) a-tungaischa pranatair-grihyate palam.'

That the created beings can obtain all pleasures and benefits by invoking Daya is the purport of this sloka. That benefit and pleasure is nothing less than Bhagavat-anubhava, the enjoyment of the Lord. The green effulgence of the Lord's face will gladden the upasaka's eyes and mind. The benignant Kataaksha from those wonderful eyes of the Lord will place at the devotee's disposal all the four *purusharthas* which he can gather without effort. No wonder the Lord has been enjoyed by Nammalwar as *ati-bhogya*, an exceedingly enjoyable personality in the second *pathu* (centurium) of his Tiruvoimozhi. So sweet to look on, so pleasant and so enjoyable, and at the same time so kind and gracious that in response to one *anjali* (folded hands) lifted towards His feet, he confers all boons and benefits.

The word Vrishachalapate(h) must be taken to govern not only the *Paade* coming next to it, but also the words *mukha-kanti* and *Kataaksha* occuring in the sloka.

नयने वृषाचलेन्दोस्तारामैत्रीं दधानया करुणे ।
दृष्टस्त्वयैव जनिमानपवर्गमकृष्टपच्यमनुभवति ॥ (२०)

Nayane Vrishaachalendostaaraamaitreem dadhanayaa Karune ।
Dhristastvayaiva janimaan apavargam akrishta pachyam anubhavati ॥ (20)

Daya Devi! He who at the time of his birth is seen by you, who always carry with you the spontaneous and unaccountable love flowing from the eyes of that effulgent Moon (Srinivasa) shining on the Tirumala Hill,—such a person enjoys the bliss of Moksha without effort, even like a person who reaps a bumper hearvest without toiling on the fields.

In the previous sloka the poet referred to all the *phalaas* or fruits obtainable from Daya including *trivarga* and *apavarga* as referred to in sloka 10 above. But Daya's great desire is to confer everlasting bliss on all her votaries and she is not satisfied with giving them only the smaller and impermanent benefits and pleasures. So in this sloka Desika says that if a person is blessed with Daya's kataaksha at the time of his birth he is sure to obtain Moksha.

There is a Mahabharata *Vakya* (text) which says that if at the time of one's birth, one is blessed by the gracious glances of Madhusoodhana that one becomes a satvika, a gnani and always thinks of attaining moksha. This is referred to in Sri Vaishnava Sampradaya as *Jaayamaana Kataaksha*. Desika here postulates that it is Daya Devi that impels the Lord to bestow that *kataaksha* on certain individuals, of course consistent with their fitness for the same achieved in previous births.

Tara Maitree is what is known as love at first sight. That is, here is no knowing why that love arises. Daya Devi, it is siad ere, carries that unaccountable love of the Lord towards the aspirant nd blesses him with a glance from the Lord's eyes. The Lord t would have been noticed has been referred to here as a moon hining on the crest of Vrishaachala. A loving glance from a ovely Person. Bright and effulgent like the moon, Lord Srinivasa estows His loving and affectionate glances, and the result is that he man or woman who is born under such auspices attain salvations vithout much ado. Apavarga is Moksha. Akrishtapachyam is rops for which one has not toiled. The toiler is someone else, nd he is referred to in the next sloka, where we will enjoy the randeur of this sentiment of Desika.

श्रीमते निगमान्तमहादेशिकाय नमः
श्री श्रीनिवास परब्रह्मणे नमः

॥ दयाशतकम् ॥

DAYAA SATAKAM

THIRD DECAD

[Slokas 21 *to* 30 *are couched in the Oupachchandasika metre. The first and third paadaas contain eleven aksharas while the second and fourth contain twelve. The general topic of this decad is Subha-Subhaga-tanuhu* शुभसुभगतनुः *which is the gist of the third centurium of Nammalwar's Tiruvoimozhi, according to Desika. The very second sloka of this decad deals with the auspicious* (*Subha*) *and attractive and beautiful* (*Subhaga*) *body* (*tanuhu*) *of the Lord. We shall enjoy it in its place.*]

समयोपनतैस्तव प्रवाहैरनुकम्पे कृतसंप्लवा धरित्री ।
शरणागतसस्यमालिनीयं वृषशैलेशकृषीवलं धिनोति ॥ (२१)

Samayopanataistava pravaahaihi Anukampe! kritasamplavaa dharitree ।
Saranaagata sasyamaalineeyam Vrishasailesa Krisheevalam dhinoti.॥ (21)

Lord's Sympathy personified! This (lady called) Earth gladdens (the heart of) that Farmer, who has Tirumala as His abode, by wearing as garlands rows and rows of crops in the form of Saranaagataas,as a result of her being drenched (irrigated) by timely and copious showers of yours.

To a farmer there is no sight more pleasing than that of his fields covered as far as eyes can see by luxuriant and stoutstalked crops. Lord Srinivasa is the Farmer here. Crops cannot grow at all, much less can they grow in abundance, unless there is plentiful rain at the proper periods in the course of the cultivation operations. Here Daya is the rain that pours in plenty (pravaaha) and at proper times (samayopanataihi). Ordinary rain helps crops to grow. The rain of Daya is productive of Saranaagataas or Prapannaas—those who surrender themselves up to the Lord completely. The purpose of creation—bringing into being this earth with embodied souls on t—is to give those souls a chance to redeem themselves. When, realising their lack of *gnana* and *shakthi* and their consequent unfitness to pursue the prescribed path of Karmayoga, Gnanayaoga and Bhakthiyoga, they or at least many of them resort to *prapatti* or *Saranagati* as a direct means for attaining moksha,—there is a plentiful crop of prapannas and the Lord's heart rejoices at that sight. The process of Prapatti, which is described in greater detail in the later slokas of this Stotra and postulated with almost scientific accuracy as a potent means for the attainment of Moksha, depends on the flow of Daya or mercy from the Lord. And so it is pointed out in this sloka that *Daya-pravaaha* is really responsible for this bumper crop of prapannaas.

Not only should rain be plentiful but it must be seasonal and timely. A heavy downpour calculated to wash away the seeds and seedlings or to immerse the ripe crops in a deluge and prevent them from being harvested can hardly be called helpful rain. So rain has to be *samayopanata*, making itself available at the proper times. That, Daya is here pointed out to be,—rendering timely help.

Samaya also means a system or school of thought, a *Darsana.* Desika has very deftly employed the term here to suggest *Sri Vaishnava Samaya*—or to refer to it by another name, *Ramanuja Darsana.* For it is only in this system Daya is relied on as the sole refuge of helpless beings, and Saranagati is laid down as a potent force for securing salvation straight. In no other system of thought is prapatti regarded as *Saakshan-mokshopaaya* (direct and immediate means of salvation). One can certainly look up to Sri Desika who was the first to propound this system of prapatti as a well-developed and scientifically verified means for *moksha*,—to show to us the several details of this system which was adopted by the Alwars and demonstrated to the world through his own *anushtaana* or observance by that greatest Acharya of all times, Ramanuja. This sloka should therefore be understood as conveying to us the suggestion that *Dayaapravaaha* (or the flow of Daya) is productive of the greatest good only in this *Samaya* of Vaishnavism.

There is a peculiar aptness in the reference to the Lord's abode as Vrisha-Saila here. A cultivator who has a large extent of land can have a look at the whole of it only by standing on a raised place.

Tirumala, being a hill, serves the purpose of being a good station from which to view the entire world below. A watchman over fields has to stand on a raised platform to see that the growing crops are not grazed by straying cattle.

Reading the 20th and 21st slokas together a very beautiful sentiment can be seen to be very naively dealt with by this peerless poet-philosopher. It was said in the 20th sloka that one who gets blessed by the *kataaksha* of Sreenivasa at the time of one's birth enjoys the benefits of a bumper harvest without toiling for it. By referring to the selfsame Lord Srinivasa as a *Krisheevala* (farmer or cultivator) in this sloka, Desika shows that the needed cultivation is done by the Lord. There can be no crop without cultivation. In the pursuit of all other *upayas* (or means) for moksha, the aspirant is the cultivator or toiler. In prapatti, the Lord is the chief cultivator. That is why He is known as *Siddhopaaya.* Prapatti done by a *mumukshu* (aspirant) is only a *sadhyopaaya.* Human effort and divine grace are respectively the *Sadhyopaaya* and *Siddhopaaya.* Here is a dwandhva (a duality) which has always to go together to yield good results. Divine grace is always there, but for us to obtain its benefits we have to deserve them by doing some thing, however small. It may be a mere *vyaaja* or pretext—it cannot be more—but if it is not there, the mercy of the Lord does not stay, even like rain which runs away from a raised and hard surface. A clever man always digs a tank and keeps it ready so that when the rain comes, the water will stay in it and be available for his needs. His digging the tank does not create rain; but it helps to retain the rain when it comes. This अविनाभाव (inseparableness) between Siddhopaya and Sadhyopaaya is one of the very fine points expatiated upon by Desika in several places in his numerous works. All the nice points of Desika's system find beautiful poetical expression in the Daya Sataka.

कलशोदधिसंपदो भवत्याः करुणे सन्मतिमन्थसंस्कृतायाः ।
अमृतांशमवैमि दिव्यदेहं मृतसंजीवनमञ्जनाचलेन्दोः ॥ (२२)

Kalasodadhi sampado bhavatyaha Karune! sanmati mantha-
samskrutaayaha । [*chalendoho.* ॥ (22)
Amrutaamsam avaimi divya deham mrutasanjeevanam Anjanaa-

O! Mercy Divine! methinks the divine body of that bright Moon of Anjanaadri,—a body that has the capacity to revive and bring to life those that are dead,—is only the AMRUTA (nectar) obtained

by churning you,—who are like a veritable milk-ocean,—with good intellect as the churning rod.

The Divya-mangala Vigrahas or Bhagavad-roopas or forms, with special reference to the Archa-moorti or *Vigraha* (image) of Lord Srinivasa is here spoken of as the quintessence of Daya. This vigraha is शुग (auspicious) and also सुभग (beautiful) and so is known as *Divyamangala Vigraha*, *Subhaasraya*, *Subhasubhagatanu*, and so on.

As one of the chief propounders of the Alwar-cult, Desika is here seen postulating the excellence and supremacy of *Bhagavad-vigraha*. In certain philosophies God has no name and no form. He has no attributes either; He merely is. Ramanuja has refuted those philosophies and ably demonstrated that the Lord does possess names and forms which He takes on for the delectation of His devotees. No one need be afraid that thereby He is getting finitised. His infinity and transcendence are in no way affected by His assuming names and forms.

That there are five such forms or *roopas*, which the Lord takes on, is spoken of in the *Agamaas* (Paancharatra or Bhagavat-Sastra chiefly) and in the Alwars' outpourings. They are *Para*, *Vyuha*, *Haarda*, *Vibhava* and *Archa*. Para-roopa is the figure with which the Lord shines in Paramapada or Vaikunta for the eternal enjoyment of the Celestials, who are Nityas or Muktas. *Vyuha roopa* is the fourfold form—Vasudeva, Sankarshana, Pradyumna, and Aniruddha—assumed by the Lord for the benefit of *dyaana* by yogis. The *roopa* of *Ksheerabdhinaatha*, reclining on Adisesha in the middle of the milk-ocean, and the twelve forms of Kesava, Narayana, Madhava, Govinda, Vishnu, Madhusoodana, Trivikrama, Vaamana, Sreedhara, Hrisheekesa, Padmanaabha and Daamodara (Dwadasa Namaas) are also regarded as being in this category. The *Haarda roopa* also known as *Antaryaami roopa*, is the infinitely small form with which the Lord dwells in the heart of every *chetana*, sentient being. The forms of the Avataraas, strictly so called, like Rama and Krishna, are the *Vibhava roopas*. Lastly comes the *Archaa-roopa*, the form of idols or images of which the *Saalagrama* and the images in temples are the most prominent. These are all referred to later in this very stotra by Desika.

A great amount of ignorance and confusion prevails about the nature and function of the *Archaavatara*. We are treated by several modern philosophers to theories like images being mere stepping stones to higher *dhyaana* or contemplation and the ultimate realisation of the formless. Those who deny the validity of all forms have necessarily to deny the validity and potency of vigrahaas at least in the ultimate, though they also worship in Temples in a condescending way as a concession to the "ignorant men who believe that the image is the God." The Alwars and the Acharyas, like Ramanuja, Paraasara Bhatta and Desika, have spared no pains to refute such unlearned and ill-informed critics and their ways of thinking. This sloka is calculated to establish that images of the Lord are as valid, true and helpful as Daya, the Lord's Mercy, itself. Though the word 'Divya Deham' meaning Divine body will take in all the five forms enumerated above, the reference to the Divya deha of *Anjanaachala-Indu* (Moon of Tirumala) shows that Desika is specially thinking of theArcha Vigrahaas of the Lord which by way of *upalakshana* will indicate the other four forms also. We shall have occasion to refer to this topic again in commenting on several later slokas and so shall not further elaborate on the same here.

The Puranic churning of *Ksheerabdi* (ocean of milk) by inserting the *Manthara* mountain as the churning rod is in the poet's mind. That process is adapted here to suit the present point. In the *upameya*, Daya is herself the milk ocean. Being ever sweet and delectable she does possess all the fine qualities of the milk ocean. She is as such ocean churned by *San-mathi* or the intellect (or desire) of those who answer to the Upanishadic definition of a *Sat*: अस्ति ब्रह्मेति चेद् वेद। सन्तमेनं ततो विदुरिति ॥ The rather general term San-mathi, without mentioning who that *sat* is, has been deliberately adopted by Desika to take in and suit the several forms of archa such as Swayam Vyaktha, Saiddha, Daiva, Maanusha etc., (vide sloka 9 above). The idea is that in Swayamvyakta the *Sat* is the Lord Himself as it is His will or Sankalpa alone that is responsible for that *aavirbhava* or appearance. Similarly the particular Siddha, Deva or human being respectively at whose invitation the Lord takes a shape or form must be the Sat in each of the cases of Saiddha, Daiva and Maanusha respectively. Poigai Alwar's தமருகந்தது எவ்வுருவம் அவ்வுருவம் தானே is the authority for Desika here. The desire of the devotee is the immediate cause, but it is Daya that is the fundamental cause for all *Vigrahaas*.

The use of the word *Indu* or moon to describe the Lord here is very apt. The moon is called amrita-kirana or nectar-rayed. He is the moon and his Vigraha or Form is the *amruta* or nectar.

In the Puranic churning several objects—good, bad and indifferent—were brought to the surface. There came out poison as well as nectar—and also the moon, elephants, horses, trees, etc. Lakshmi also came out as a result of that churning. All the other objects were distributed to others but the Lord took Lakshmi for Himself. Here the Lord's Divyamangala Vigraha is referred to as 'amrutaamsam' the quintessence of amruta. The Vigraha is the Lakshmi in this churning.

Avaimi—I understand; I realise. This predicate has been obviously employed here to show to us Desika's conviction that the Lord's image-forms are the quintessence of Daya. It is only when Desika wants that a rare and important Siddhanta or conclusion he has come to should be properly understood and followed by us he employs this word. Vedanta Desika's verdict on any topic has to be accepted by all right-thinking men.

जळधेरिव शीतता दये त्वं वृषशैळाधिपतेः स्वभावभूता ।
प्रळयारभटीनटीं तदीक्षां प्रसभं ग्राहयसि प्रसत्तिळास्यम् ॥ (२३)

Jaladheriva Seetataa Daye! Twam Vrishasailaadhipathes-swabhaavabhootaa ।
Pralayaarabhateenateem tadeekshaam Prasabham Graahayasi prasaththilaasyam. ॥ (23)

Dayadevi! You who are of the essence of Lord Srinivasa's nature, even as coolness is the essential quality of the Sea, force His fearful and destructive looks (responsible for pralaya) into sweet and pleasant looks responsible for creation and protection, and thereby convert their frightful devil-dance into a sweetpaced and lovely Laasya (dance).

"It (Para Brahman) looked and said to Itself 'I shall become the many',"—so says the Upanishad. The Lord's looks as indicating His Sankalpa or will are there said to be the immediate cause of creation or projection of the world. Another and different natured *eekshana* or look must have been responsible for Pralaya or destruction. The looks that caused destruction are likened in this sloka to a dancer indulging in *Aarabhati*, a violent form of dance (aghora-tandava). At the time of Creation those very looks indulge in *laasya*—a soft and sweet dance. (These terms are again taken from Bharatasastra—vide sloka 16 above. *Aarabhati* normally is used for the '*taandava*' of a male; *laasya* is the dancing of a female. In the Yadhavabhyudaya (IV. 120) Sri Krishna's dance on the hood of the serpent Kaliya is referred to as *aarabhati*). Daya is said to be responsible for changing the nature and character of the Lord's looks from the violent and frightful form into the soft and pleasing form. She is said to effect the conversion by force (prasabham).

She is able to effect this change because by nature the Lord is merciful, just as by nature the sea is cool. Though the sea may be rough and hot at times owing to currents and tides, its essential nature is coolness. So too mercifulness is the essential nature of the Lord, and His ferocity and fury which were responsible for pralaya or destruction were really induced by external causes such as man's ingratitude and insubordination. When Daya Devi suggests to Him to create once again (see sloka 17 above) He very easily agrees to do so because His inherent nature is mercy.

Prasaththi means prasaada or anugraha. There is a paatantara (different reading) for this word as prasakti प्रसक्ति which has been taken to mean the process of creation.

Though some force was necessary on the part of Daya to change the Lord's inclination from pralaya to srishti, she succeeds not because of this force—for no one can force the mighty Lord to do anything against His nature, wish, or desire—but because inherently the Lord is merciful and the moment the suggestion emanates from Daya Devi the Lord eagerly accepts the same and brings about creation and protects the world so created. In sloka 16 above pralaya was said to be an act of Daya. That is the truth about it. But in a general way to the ordinary man pralaya standing for destruction is fearful, while creation is pleasant and agreeable. This sloka portrays this common viewpoint very artistically.

प्रणतप्रतिकूलमूलघाती प्रतिघः कोऽपि वृषाचलेश्वरस्य ।
कलमे यवसापचायनी या करुणे किंकरतां तवोपयाति ॥ (२४)

Pranata pratikoolamoola ghaatee Prathigha (*h*) *Kopi Vrishaachaleswarasya*
Kalame Yavasaapachaayaneetya Karune kimkarataam tavopayaati. (24)

Karuna! The anger of that peerless Lord of Vrishaachala attains he state of being your servant (as it gets employed by you) in the ause of rooting out and destroying the obstacles and barriers (in he way of the progress) of those who bow (by prostrating) before the Lord—even like removing grass (weeding) which grass is an obstacle o the adequate growth of paddy crop.

It was said in the previous sloka that the angry mood of the Lord which was responsible for the pralaya was changed into a favourable and benevolent mood in order to bring about creation and protection. Daya Devi, it is said here, does not allow all that anger to go to waste, but harnesses it all in a very proper cause, namely the removal of obstacles in the way of Pranataas or prapannas—those who have bent themselves suppliantly before the Lord, and totally surrendered themselves to Him.

The fierce dance known as aarabhati and referred to in the previous sloka must have been attended by a lot of anger. Daya cleverly changed the aarabhati into laasya. Anger got substituted by shanti and sweetness. Then Daya Devi thought, "why should all this anger be wasted?." It can be enlisted in a good cause and utilised to do away with the difficulties that the devotees of the Lord experience at the hands of the wicked. Anger is useful to destroy the wicked and for the wiping out of the evil doers (Dushkrit-vinaasa). The Lord Himself, it is said, took on anger ('Kopam Aaharayat-teevram'—Valmiki) and killed His foe by the force of that anger (சினத்தினால் தென்னிலங்கைக் கோமானைச் செற்ற—Tiruppavai 12). The Lord Himself has no foes. He is alike to all—समोहं सर्वभूतेषु (Samoham Sarva Bhootheshu). The enemies of His devotees are alone His enemies and He comes into this world often for protecting the good, (for that purpose) destroying the wicked, and (thereby) establishing Dharma. Daya Devi helps in the process in two ways, one by egging Him on to protect the righteous, and another by making Him weed out the wicked. In order to bring about the latter, she has necessarily to make the Lord angry against the bad sort. This is what is referred to in this sloka by saying that the Lord's anger is made to subserve Daya in the process of protecting the good.

The analogy makes the meaning clear. In the course of cultivation an important duty of the cultivator is to remove the weeds that grow alongside the crops and impede their proper growth.

Periodical weeding is very essential for the full and healthy growth of crops. So too Sadhus have to be protected by weeding out evil-doers. Daya Devi achieves this result by utilising the services of the Lord's anger. So that anger is said to become Daya Devi's servant.

कोऽपि is a word which indicates unequalled-ness and extra-ordinary-ness (In Tamil கோபி means an angry and irate person. I have a feeling that the word has been deliberately used here by the Poet who is a master of Tamil and Sanskrit and also Manipravala, in a lighter vein, so that they who can see the trick may enjoy the fun of referring to கோபி Kopi Vrishaachaleswar's Kopa (கோபம்) or anger.) Pratigha means anger, wrath.

The structure of the sloka is such that it talks of the Lord's anger becoming a slave to Daya, not of Daya making that anger her servant. When all good qualities are her anucharaas (followers) (sloka 11) anger also evidently desires to enlist itself in Daya's services. The Lord was referred to as a Farmer or Cultivator in sloka 21 above. That idea is developed in this sloka by referring to weeding operations.

अबहिष्कृतनिग्रहान्विदन्तः कमलाकान्तगुणान्स्वतन्त्रतादीन् ।
अविकल्पमनुग्रहं दुहानां भवतीमेव दये भजन्ति सन्तः ॥ (२५)

Abahishkruta nigrahaan vidantaha Kamalaakaanta gunaan svatantratadeen
Avikalpam anugraham duhanaam Bhavateemeva Daye! bhajanti Santaha. (25)

Daya Devi! The truly learned and devout people who very well know that the attributes like uncontrolled independence possessed by the Consort of Kamala (Lord Srinivasa) do not eschew (but take in) punishment, rely only on you who uniformly (without any option or alternative) yield (nothing but) protection.

The idea contained in sloka 15 above is pursued here by pointing out how, while all the other attributes of the Lord are common to protectiveness and punishment, the attribute of Daya alone is productive of protection and protection alone. There the six well-known gunas Gnana, Bala etc., were set off against Daya and demonstrated to be useless,—even harmful,—to us in the absence of Daya. Here the other attributes of the Lord going to make up His *Paratva* or transcendent glory like swaatantriya, *i.e.*, Independence (not being dependent on, or subservient to, anyone else) are mentioned and it is pointed out that they are all useful to, and actually used, by the Lord both for protecting and for punishing. In other words they have not banished nigraha or punishment from the scope and ambit of their activity. But Daya is exclusively there for the purpose of protection. She does not know what punishment is, and is therefore uniformly and invariably productive of anugraha or protection alone. With her there is no scope for acting in one of two ways. Vikalpa is changing, option, alternative. The absence of it is avikalpa. Anugraham-duhaanaam—yielding protection even as a cow yields milk for the sustenance of its calf and the delectation of others.

Santaha—Here again the great sages and seers whom the Upanishad celebrates as 'those who alone are' (vide commentary on sloka 22 above) are referred to and their knowledge and belief are shown to us for being respectfully adopted and followed. They are also referred to as '*vidantaha*,'—knowing persons. What they know is that except Daya all the attributes of the Lord are capable of being used in punishing us as well as in protecting us: but where Daya comes into play only protection can be had. In a later sloka (64) of this Stotra. Desika goes further and demonstrates how Daya transforms what is intended by the Lord as punishment for a chetana, into that chetana's protection and for his good.

कमलानिलयस्त्वया दयालुः करुणे निष्करुणा निरूपणे त्वम् ।
अत एव हि तावकाश्रितानां दुरितानां भवति त्वदेव भीतिः ॥ (२६)

Kamalaanilayastvaya dayaaluhu Karune! nishkarunaa niroopanetvam
Ataevahi taavakaasritaanaam duritaanaam bhavati tvadeva bheetihi.(26)

Karuna Devi! The Abode of Kamala or Lakshmi (Lord Srinivasa) becomes a dayalu or merciful person because of you; but on close scrutiny (it turns out that) you are yourself really totally bereft of compassion (Karuna). Because of this only, the sins of those who rely on you for help are afraid only of you.

Daya is here described as *nirdaya*. Virodaalankara. Paradoxical as it may seem, contact with Daya makes the Lord a dayaavaan, merciful Being; but she herself has no daya or pity (towards certain persons). Here, the sins of the Lord's devotees who invoke His Daya are personified and it is stated that they are really afraid only of Daya and not of the mighty Lord. For while they get recognition from the Lord, they will not get any quarter from Daya Devi who mercilessly puts them down in protecting those who rely on her.

To call a person merciless smacks of *ninda* निन्दा or abuse. But the point of the abuse is to demonstrate how complete and full Daya's protectiveness is in regard to her votaries. So this is a form of ninda-stuti (praise through apparent abuse).

Daya is itself an attribute or quality (guna) and hence it cannot itself have a guna or attribute. Therefore Daya makes of the Consort of Sri a Dayaavan by being His guna or quality. But mercy cannot be an attribute of Daya itself and so Daya is bereft of that attribute of Daya or mercy, and this is very cleverly stated here by referring to Daya having no Daya.

अतिलङ्घितशासनेष्वभीक्ष्णं वृषशैलाधिपतिर्विजृम्भितोष्मा ।
पुनरेव दये क्षमानिदानैर्भवतीमाद्रियते भवत्यधीनैः ॥ (२७)

Atilalanghita Saasaneshvabheekshnam Vrishasailaadhipatir
vijrumbhithoshmaa
Punareva Daye! *Kshamaanidaanaihi Bhavateem aadriyate bhavat-yadheenaihi.* (27

Dayaa! The Lord of Vrishasaila, who manifests great heat (anger) at the perpetual transgressions (by people) of His mandates, turns to you (and relies on you) once again with consideration and respect, because of the forgiveness-inducing acts that are peculiarly ascribable to you.

Ooshma, meaning heat or fever, and nidana, meaning pathology or diagnosis, are terms taken from Ayurveda, the science of medicine.

Angered by the increasing sinningness, and the transgressions from the prescribed path, on the part of created beings, the Lord, so to say, gets high fever. Daya Devi then begins to doctor Him. Her prescriptions, administrations and applications allay the fever and so the Lord gratefully respects and honours her as His saviour.

This and the next sloka deal with the benefits that the Lord Himself derives from Daya Devi. Having postulated that the Lord has a Vigraha or body—the topic of this decad (vide sloka 22 above)—that idea is kept in mind in these two slokas (27 and 28) to bring out the great truth that Daya Devi brings comfort and cheer not only to us but to the Lord Himself.

The use of the term 'punareva' (once again) shows that it is only when Daya is forgotten by the Lord He gets into an angry state at His creatures' sins, and thereby develops fever. When once again He turns to Daya, He feels relieved of the fever and restored to normal.

Nidaanam means a primary cause, also a cause in general. The causes that bring about forgiveness (Kshama) are of Daya Devi's doing. So they are referred to here as Daya-adheena. It is only when forgiveness is injected into the Lord by Daya Devi who has correctly spotted the trouble (diagnosed the disease) that the Lord's fever is said to subside. When she effects this cure, the Lord is immediately pleased and He fittingly remunerates (honours) the Doctor,—Daya Devi.

करुणे दुरितेषु मामकेषु प्रतिकारान्तरदुर्जयेषु खिन्नः ।
कवचायितया त्वयैव शार्ङ्गी विजयस्थानमुपाश्रितो वृषाद्रिम् ॥ (२८)

Karune! duriteshu maamakeshu Pratikaaraantara durjayeshu khinnaha
Kavachaayitaya tvayaiva Sarngee Vijayastaanam upaasrito Vrishaadrim. (28)

Karuna Devi! That Wielder of the Sarnga (Kodanda: Bow) grieved at the fact that my sins cannot be vanquished by any other means, has fled to Vrishaadri and taken His stand there (as in an invulnerable fort) as the place of His victory, covering Himself with your helpful self as an armour.

In the previous sloka the analogy employed related to fever and the cure from it. In this sloka the poet employs the incidents of warfare to bring out the idea he seeks to convey. The sins committed by me, the poet says, are like so many darts or arrows flung at His sweet and soft form. He cannot ward off those arrows by any of the usual means employed in warfare calculated to destroy them and prevent them from doing harm and inflicting wounds. The sins cannot be destroyed except by expiation (prayaschitta) or enjoyment of fruits (anubhava) vide sloka 34 post. I do not even feel repentant; how am I going to take to expiation? If I am to get the punishment I deserve for those sins, even eternity will be inadequate to see me punished for all my sins. They are so huge and so numerous. So the Lord is very much pained and sorry (Khinnaha).

The only chance of victory that suggests itself to Him is to retreat to a place where He will not have to see my sins and sinful propensities. That place is Tirumalai. By its sacredness it destroys the sins of even such as me because I paid obeisance to it. Even on the heights of His victory-seat (Vijayastana) He encases Himself in an armour of Daya, just like a warrior donning the armour for protection from hostile attacks. Daya is thus the Kavacha or armour which the Lord puts on.

The description of the Lord as Sarngee (शार्ङ्गी) in this sloka is worthy of being enjoyed by all rasikas. This name of the Lord occurs in only one other sloka in this stotra—the 106th—where He is referred to as Saarngadhanva. We shall enjoy its beauty and appropriateness there.

Here Desika has deliberately employed the term Saarngee (the wielder of that powerful bow known as Saarnga: சார்ங்கமென்னும் வில்லாண்டான் as Periyalwar has put it) to show that the Lord's failure to achieve victory, by means other than what involves the employment of Daya, is not due to His being a weak or powerless person bereft of the essential qualities of a warrior. He is in fact a Sarva-Shakta, a Mahaveera, and the most powerful of weapons, the Kodanda, is in His hands. He can put down, subdue and vanquish any one. As Valmiki has put it, if He makes up His mind to kill a person in war, there is no one strong enough to protect such a person—Traatum-na-Shaktaaha-yudhi-Ramavadhyam त्र तु न शक्ता युंधि रामदध्यं That way of achieving victory however does not appeal to the Lord. His great desire is to quell and vanquish the sin in the sinner and not to kill and end the sinner himself. Has He not as Sri Rama given to us the correct definition of a Veera as *Paapam Aaryena yo hanti saha veeraha* पापं आयेण यो हंति स वीरः—He is the true veera who quells sin by righteousness. With His Saarnga He can only mow down millions as He did in the Ramayana. That however He does not reckon as victory. He with the Saarnga in His hands is thus helpless against my sins, since the Saarnga can only kill me but not my sins. Daya has therefore to come to His rescue as a protector against sins. And therefore with Daya as His armour He attains the seat of victory, Tirumalai, which, as explained in the commentary on the very first sloka of this Stotra, is itself capable of cleansing us of our Sins.

Incidentally this शुभत्व (Subhatva) or auspiciousness of the Lord's Tirumeni (திருமேனி) or glorious body is shown to be the result of its intimate contact with Daya,—as intimate as that of an armour.

मयि तिष्ठति दुष्कृतां प्रधाने मितदोषानितरान्विचिन्वती त्वम् ।
अपराधगणैरपूर्णकुक्षिः कमलाकान्तदये कथं भवित्री ॥ (२९)

Mayitishtati dushkrtaam pradhaane mitadoshaan itaraan vichinvatee tvam
Aparaadhaganairapoornakukshihi Kamalaakaanta Daye! katham bhavitree (29)

When I am here, the chief among evildoers, O! Daya! you are in search of others who have but limited sins to their credit. By saving and protecting those others you will not at all feel satisfied or happy but will feel like one whose stomach does not get its fill of feed. Poor Daya! how are you going to thrive (live)?

The thought of his own huge load of sins which found mention in the previous sloka persists in this sloka too. There it was stated that the Lord Himself felt deeply pained and hurt at those sins. What pains the Lord is pleasing to Daya, it is stated here. God and Daya react to sins in diametrically opposite ways. God winces at sins in human beings and feels hurt and wounded. Daya gloats over sins and takes a pleasure and pride in excusing and forgiving them. This feature of Daya Devi is pictured here by referring to sins as Daya's food by which her hunger gets appeased. Daya hankers to protect sinners. Their sins therefore get consumed by Daya. The larger the quantity she consumes the greater will be the degree of appeasement.

The poet in the intensity of his devotional fervour calls himself an arch-sinner and the leader among sinners. This is a very usual feature with all great acharyas. Nammalwar refers to himself as பாவியேன் and கொடுவினை யேன் (sinner with a vast load of heinous sins) ஈவிலாத தீவினைகள் எத்தனை செய்தனன்கொல் (what a lot of enormous sins have I committed) and so on. Alavandar sings about himself as अमर्यादः क्षुद्रः Amaryadhaha Kshudraha and so on showering on himself ten such epithets. Following in their wake Desika also very often refers to himself as by far the greatest and tallest among sinners. In that mood he plaintively tells Daya Devi, "please turn your attention on me.

I promise you good and full food for you in the shape of sins. You are out to save sinners. By saving persons who have committed small sins you will not do justice to yourself and you will not feel satisfied. So I tell you, please turn towards me and do not waste your time searching for others whose sins will be nothing before my sins. If after such search you alight upon some of them and save them, you surely are not going to be satisfied. You will surely feel then like a hungry giant being fed on half a loaf of bread. And when I am here in the nature of a full and rich repast why turn your eyes on insufficient rationed food? I feel very much concerned to think of your semi-starvation. How are you going to live, to thrive, unless you take me on hand, protect me and feel happy that it has been given to you to achieve the redemption and protection of the greatest of sinners."?

The words used suggest that the poet takes pity and compassion on Daya Devi who is herself a storehouse of mercy.

अहमस्म्यपराधचक्रवर्ती करुणे त्वं च गुणेषु सार्वभौमी ।
विदुषी स्थितिमीदृशीं स्वयं मां वृषशैलेश्वरपादसात्कुरु त्वम् ॥ (३०)

Ahamasmi aparaadha (aparaadhi) chakravarti Karune! tvamcha guneshu saarvabhaumee
Vidusheestitimeedrseem swayam maam Vrishasaileswara Paadaasat Kuru tvam. (30)

I am the emperor of crimes (or I am an emperor among criminals). You are an Empress among good qualities (attributes). Knowing this state of affairs it is up to you to tie me up to the feet of Vrishasaileswara on your own initiative.

The poet who called himself "dushkrtam-pradhaanaha:" or "chief among wrong-doers" in sloka 29 refers to himself here as an emperor of crimes (or, in the paata 'aparaadhichakravarti' as, "the emperor among criminals." He refers to Daya Devi as an Empress of gunaas or good attributes. The glory of an Empress will go up if she enslaves an emperor and imprisons him. Therefore Daya Devi is requested in and by this sloka to capture Desika as a prisoner-of-war and to imprison him at the feet of the Lord of Vrishasaila. Being Swaadheena-Vrishagireesa (sloka 11), *i.e.*, having Lord Srinivasa Himself under her sway, she is called upon by the poet to make him His vassal.

The term aparaadha-chakravartee may also be split up as aparadha-chakra-vartee, meaning thereby one who lives moves and has his being in aparaadha, *i.e.*, fault, crime, sin and so on. I am literally in the vortex of crime. Round about me everywhere, and ever and anon, there is nought but aparaadha. I am the centre of sin. Some people build forts and ramparts for their safety and live within them. I am living in such a state in the midst of sin. I beseech you who are an Empress backed up by strength, valour and other anucharaas (sloka 11) to besiege me, blast the rampart walls, shatter my fort and to come in and capture me and enslave me. You can accomplish this task. You know full well this state of affairs which cries out for redress.

The word ' swayam ' can be taken along with ' vidushee ' (you know) in which case *tvam* coming at the end of the sloka will be the subject for the predicate *Paadasaat kuru;* or *tvam* may be taken along with *vidhushee* and the sloka read as ' swayam paadasaat kuru '—Please by yourself and without any move from me enslave me at His feet. If you expect me to move in the matter, I may not. So please do so of your own accord.

The third decad thus winds up with a prayer to Daya to take us to the Feet of the Lord. The vigraha of the Lord is so beautiful and attractive that the moment one learns about it one hastens to enjoy it. Such an enjoyment is to be obtained only by falling at His feet. That can be done only if Daya Devi takes pity on us and makes us do so.

Incidentally it may be noted that in the first sloka of this decad Anukampa was used. Then regularly Karuna and Daya have been employed in alternate slokas.

श्रीमते निगमान्तमहादेशिकाय नमः
श्री श्रीनिवास परब्रह्मणे नमः

॥ दयाशतकम् ॥

DAYAA SATAKAM

FOURTH DECAD

THE third Decad started with a sloka in which the word 'Maalinee' finds a place. The fourth decad employs the Malinee metre. It is a metre with fifteen aksharaas in a paada. Its lilting rhythm is a very pleasing feature of this metre.

As the stotra proceeds, the incorporation in it of the thoughts and ideas of the Dramidopanishad becomes more and more apparent. The topic of the fourth 'Paththu' (பத்து) of Tiruvoimozhi is the Sarva-bhogyaatisaayitvam of the Lord. That is, His enjoyableness and the delectation He affords to His devotees, excel every other enjoyment known to man: against them the other enjoyments pale into nothingness. In the second decad the atibhogyabhava or high degree of enjoyability was enjoyed. After knowing about His beautiful Roopa in the 3rd paththu, Nammalwar postulates that no other enjoyment can come anywhere near the enjoyable quality of the Lord and thereby demonstrates how He excels (अतिशय) all other joys. This fourth decad of Daya Sataka deals with this trait of the Lord very pointedly as we shall see.

While singing the very first sloka of this decad it is obvious that the poet is thinking of the gist of the first verse of Nammalwar's fourth Paththu "காலப்பெறச்சிந்தித்து உய்மினோ" 'Betake yourselves betimes to thinking of Him and thereby save yourselves.' The idea of this 31st sloka is, while there is strength in the body and while the karanaas are properly functioning let me go up the Tirumalai Hill and take my residence there to obtain the grace of the Gracious Lord of that Hill.

अशिथिलकरणेऽस्मिन्नक्षतश्वासवृत्तौ
वपुषि गमनयोग्ये वासमासादयेयम् ।
वृषगिरिकटकेषु व्यञ्जयत्सु प्रतीतै-
र्मधुमथनदये त्वां वारिधाराविशेषैः ॥ (३१)

Asithila Karanesmin Akashta-shwasa vrittau
Vapushigamana yogye vaasam aasadayeyam ।
Vrishagiri-katakeshu vyanjayatsu prateetaihi
Madhumathana Daye! tvaam varidhaara viseshaihi ॥ (31)

O! Daya of the slayer of (the asura) Madhu! while these karanaas of mine are unenfeebled, while the breathing function (in my body) is uninjured and unhurt, and while my body is still fit to freely go about. I desire to live (have my residence) on the sides (slopes) of Vrishagiri (Tirumala Hill), the famous waterfalls of which reveal and demonstrate (to us) your own flow.

Like all hills, the Tirumala Hill is also famous for its falls, such as Akasha-ganga, Paapa-vinaasa, and so on. The majestic flow of water in those falls remind Desika of the flow of Daya, how from the heights of the mighty and majestic Lord, Daya flows down and down, lower and lower, till she bathes the lowliest of the low in her beneficient waters. He therefore refers to the falls as demonstrating and visibly illustrating to us the pravaaha or flow of Daya. Vaari is water, and dhaara is a downward current, a descending stream.

Life on the Tirumalai Hill is prayed for for the reason that by seeing the water falls which are there in plenty one will ever and anon be reminded and kept in mind of Daya.

In the days of the Alwars and of Desika there were no ghat roads and no vehicles to take people up the Hill. Ascent of the Hill was a very difficult and laborious process. It could not be accomplished unless one had a sound, strong and sturdy body. The powers of sight, hearing etc. (Indhriyas) should be keen and unimpaired. The lungs must be functioning properly so that the difficult ascent involving a great strain on breathing may not have any adverse effect on the breathing process. The body itself should be capable of free and easy movement. The wise man therefore will like to accomplish the climbing of the Tirumala Hill while his faculties are unimpaired and intact, and will not postpone and put it off till after he has aged and his strength of body has thereby waned. Nammalwar has in the third decad of the third Paththu of his Tiruvoimozhi sung எய்த்து இளைப்பதன் முன்னம் அடைமினோ in regard to this very Hill. This sloka is almost a translation and elaboration of that sentiment. The same Alwar has sung about another Hill, Tirumalirumjolaimalai (Alagar Hill in Madura) in the same strain (கிளரொளி இளமை கெடுவதன் முன்னம் before your youth, and buoyancy of body and spirit decline). Tirumangai Alwar has similarly advised us to go up the Himalayas to worship Sri Badrinath Mahaprabhu before we get bent forward in body and are obliged to take to a stick for help and support (முற்ற மூத்துக் கோல்துணையா). Vedanta Desika who had drunk deep at the nectar of the Alwars' rapturous songs gives the quintessence of their sayings in Sanskrit, so that those who do not know Tamil, or who will not take to the study of Tamil works, may not altogether lose the beauties of the Prabhandas. This sloka furnishes an illustration of Desika's translating the sentiments of the Alwars into Sanskrit verse.

Days is here referred to as Madhu-mathana-Daya *i.e.*, Days of the slayer of Madhu. Madhu and Kaitabha were two asuras who had run away with the Vedas. Hence Daya is sure to have the same power of destroying the evil in us and redeeming us from sin and restoring us to the Lord.

अविदितनिजयोगक्षेममात्मानभिज्ञं
गुणलवरहितं मां गोप्तुकामा दये त्वम् ।
परवति चतुरैस्ते विभ्रमैः श्रीनिवासे
बहुमतिमनपायां विन्दसि श्रीधरण्योः ॥ (३२)

Avidhita nija yoga kshemam atmaanabhigyam
gunalava rahitam maam goptukamaa Daye! twam ।
Paravati chaturaiste vibhramaissreenivase
bahumatimanapaayaam vindhasi Sreedharanyoho ॥ (32)

Daya Devi! I do not know what is good for me: (in fact) I do not know myself; and in me there is not an iota of goodness. You desire to protect such a person (myself) and with that end in view, you capture the heart of Lord Sreenivasa by your cleverness and amorous tactics. Sri Devi (Lakshmi) and Bhoomi Devi when they see the Lord thus captured and captivated by you, look upon you with great respect and high esteem.

What Daya Devi achieves with a view to protect us is a matter for wonder and admiration for Sridevi and Bhoodevi. Protection of persons like us who are ignorant of our own yoga and kshema cannot be an easy task. If at heart we know what is good for ourselves,—what we should get which we do not now have, and what we should safely retain out of those we have—it will be something to proceed upon. Daya has to think for us and find out what will be for our ultimate and lasting good, and what will surely bring about ruin, and then proceed to gather the former and eschew the latter. Tirumangai Alwar in one place refers to the Lord as one 'who thinks for me and then extends His mercy towards me' தான் எனக்காய் நினைந்து அருள் செய்யும் அப்பன்.

The second epithet 'Aatmanaabhigyam' (unaware of my own true self) really is explanatory of the first. It is only if I know myself properly that I can find out what is good and what is bad. If I know myself as the human body I crave for food and for all the pleasures of the flesh. If I know myself as a deva I want Amrita for my sustenance, and so on. Prone as I am to identify myself with the body bestowed on me according to my karma, I am not able to see through it and understand my true self as a soul whose very nature is Seshatva towards the Lord.

Added to the two defections, I have nothing of good in me. Guna-lava-rahitam. Bereft of the smallest particle of goodness. And yet undaunted by these shortcomings and frailties in me Daya desires to protect me. (The poet refers to this as a 'saahasa' साहस or a bold and audacious, if not rash, act on the part of Daya in Sloka 71). Having made up her mind to protect one like me, Daya has to resort to several clever tactics to achieve that result viz., winning over the Lord and getting Him to protect me. By clever arguments and winsome ways, she annexes the Lord who willingly puts Himself in her hands and readily does what she wants Him to do.

Sri Devi and Bhoo-Devi the two Consorts of the Lord ever present by His side see what Daya does and how cleverly she achieves the redemption and rescue of sinning souls. They feel very glad and happy and admire Daya Devi's inordinate skill and adroitness and look upon her with admiration and esteem. For is not Daya doing what they so keenly desire to do?

फलवितरणदक्षं पक्षपातानभिज्ञं
  प्रगुणमनुविधेयं प्राप्य पद्मासहायम् ।
महति गुणसमाजे मानपूर्वं दये त्वं
  प्रतिवदसि यथार्हं पाप्मनां मामकानाम् ॥ (३३)

Phala vitarana daksham pakshapaataanabhigyam
  pragunamanuvidheyam praapya padmaasahaayam ।
Mahati guna samaaje maanapoorvam Daye! tvam
  prativadasi yathaar-ham paapmanaam maamakaanaam ॥ (33)

Daya Devi! (with a view to defend me against my sins) you repair to the Court presided over by Srinivasa with Padmavathi by His side—Srinivasa who is reputed for His skill in conferring (on human beings) the (proper and appropriate) fruits of their action, who does not know what partiality is, and who is (regards Himself as) bound by the laws of Manu, and before the august assembly constituted by the great gunas (of the Lord), you by quoting and referring to pramaana (authority and precedent) very cleverly reply to the arguments of my sins who prosecute me (before that Court).

Vedanta Desika's Sarya-tantra-swatantratva (mastery over all the arts, crafts and sciences) is illustrated by this sloka which shows to us his great and intimate knowledge of the workings of Courts of Justice. It is really marvellous to see how intimately acquainted he must have been with the theory and practice of law and of the fundamentals of jurisprudence. This sloka describes a Sessions Court and its workings in meticulous detail.

The Court is presided over not by a single judge but by a Bench. The word Padmaa-Sahaayam has been deliberately used to denote that the Judge is Sreenivasa, the Consort of Padma, and also that He has the sahaya (help) of Padmavati in deciding cases. A Bench of two judges even today is preferred to a single judge because where there are two judges there is no scope for any one to complain of individual caprices or idiosyncracies coming into play. Each will act as a corrective to the other.

Then the three requisites of a great and upright judge are indicated. A judge must have the capacity to sift the right from the wrong and to pass the proper judgment or sentence in each case. His conclusion must be backed up by sanction or the force of authority. In other words not only must he be clever and capable in the matter of proper adjudication, but he must be powerful enough to effectuate and carry out his own decrees and dictates. The words phala-vitarana-daksham refer to these aspects. Vitarana not only means giving, but also effectively giving the phala or fruit or result of actions.

The next qualification of a judge is his utter impartiality in judging and adjudging causes. It may be noted how the poet does not say 'impartial' but says ignorant of partiality. The judge must not know to be partial or one-sided: it must have no place in his constitution or make up. He must dispense justice alike to one and all.

Dispensation of justice according to law is the third aspect stressed by Desika here. Manu stands for laws, ordinances, rules and regulations. Praguna-Manu refers to the great and noted Manu-Dharma Shastra. The judge must obey law: he must be its 'vidheya.' subject to and controlled by it, namely law. We see here justice according to the strict legal principles and doctrines being stressed. In Padmaa-sahaayatva, we have the combination of the other principle of justice being tempered with mercy. Padma or Lakshmi is the embodiment of Mercy and Her association assures us of Mercy, whereas the submissiveness to law (Manu-vidheyatva) assures us of justice according to law. It is really difficult even for a modern student of the science of law or jurisprudence to find fault with Desika's concept of a Judge or in any way to improve on it. So much for the sentiments incorporated n the first half of the sloka.

The second half shows that the Court is a criminal court where a man is tried for offences alleged to have been committed by him, and not a civil court where the rights of parties are adjudged. We ind prosecution, defence and what is more, a jury. The sins are he prosecutors, the guna samaja or assemblage of gunas is the ury and Daya Devi is defence counsel. So minutely indeed is he idea worked out in this sloka. It is said that Daya Devi (like Portia in the Merchant of Venice) comes into a Court peopled by men and pleads. Guna is masculine gender. Before that assembly of men. Daya, a lady, boldly comes and pleads on my behalf,—Desika very touchingly says. Luckily there is a lady on the Bench—Padmavathi. The jury is to advise the judge in regard to conclusions on questions relating to fact and evidence. The gunaas of the

Lord such as the shad-gunaas referred to in sloka 15 above, the gunas like swaatantrya (independence) etc. indicated in sloka 25, and the gunaas like vaatsalya (tenderness and affection)—all of them together constitute the consultative body—the Jury in this trial of the human soul.

The sins themselves are the prosecutors. There are as many prosecutions, charges and charge-sheets as there are sins alleged to have been committed by the accused. Daya Devi counters and refutes all of them in the process of defending the accused at the bar. Some commentators have said that the gunaas are the prosecutors. It is however submitted that the words paapmanaam-prativadasi (you argue against sins) clearly indicate that the sins are the prosecutors and Daya Devi argues contra. In another place Desika employs the same analogy of a vakil pleading as against sins "Durvaara-teevra-durita-prativaavadookaihi" (Dehalee-sastuti) and there also the reference is to arguing against sins.

On what basis does Daya Devi repel the prosecution arguments —by pointless rhetoric or arguments *ad hominem*? No, *Maanapoorvam.* Based on authority,— both the written law and the interpreted law in the shape of precedents. Daya Devi's defence arguments are all submitted in strict accordance with law. No beating about the bush and humming and hawing without relevant or substantial material. Desika seems to give tips even to lawyers.

The word *pragunamanuvidheyam* has been split up into *pragunam* and *anuvidheyam* by some commentators. Pragunam means excellent; anu-vidheyam means amenable to every one. Both these are to be taken as adjectives of Padmaashayam. This interpretation though possible does not appear to be more apt and appropriate than the one adopted above, which fits in with the lofty conception and full description of a judge which Desika seems to aim at in the sloka.

अनुभवितुमघौघं नालमागामिकालः प्रशमयितुमशेषं निष्क्रियाभिर्नशक्यम् ।
स्वयमिति हि दये त्वं स्वीकृतश्रीनिवासा शिथिलितभवभीतिः श्रेयसे जायसे नः॥(३४

Anubhavitum aghaugham naalam agaami
Kaalaha Prasamayitum asesham nishkriyabhir nasakyam ।

Swayamitihi Daye! tvam sweekruta Sreenivasaa
Shithilita bhavabheetihi Shreyase Jayase naha ॥ (34

Daya Devi! seeing that all time to come will not suffice for my working out the multitude of my sins, and that those countless sins can never be totally extinguished by the performance of suitable praayaschittas or expiations, you of your own accord come into being for our welfare, annex Lord Srinivaasa, and convert Him to your view point, and thereby loosen and destroy our frightful shackles of samsara.

It looks as if one very convincing argument of Daya Devi as our defence counsel is given by way of illustration or specimen in this sloka.

The sins committed by us rise up as our prosecutors and clamour for the appropriate punishment being accorded to us for those sins. Daya Devi argues thereupon thus; " Well, be it so. But has any one thought of this? Even granting that this accused ceases committing any further sins from this moment, what length of time will be taken up in his working out all his untold multitude of sins committed during ages on ages! In all time to come he will be undergoing punishment. Time may cease but the sentences for the crime committed by him will not have run out. How then is anyone going to properly and adequately punish him and see that he serves the periods of all sentences of punishment for his sins. This is on the assumption that he ceases to sin from this moment–an impossible assumption. In fact he is going on committing in the fraction of a second (kshanaardha) crimes and sins which will qualify him for all the hell-fires for all eternity. If it is impossible to punish him fully for all his sins, and only a portion of his sins is capable of being punished, where are you going to draw the line? If you are going to excuse and quash a portion of his merited punishment, why not excuse and quash the whole? "

Finding it difficult to meet this very pertinent argument, the question of working out the sins by expiatory ceremonies is raised by some one in court, either by some member of the jury or from the Bench. Daya Devi readily retorts ' you do not know this accused person as well as I know him. He never commits sins for which expiations are prescribed. He makes it a point to commit only such sins as are classified as ' heinous ' and for which no one can ever lay down a course of expiation. And if ever there is an act for which expiation is laid down and he were to adopt it, in the course of that very process of expiation he commits gross *apachaaras* which constitute fresh crimes in addition to making the expiation itself useless. So one has to draw a blank here also. So, what is left but to pardon? Thus arguing Daya melts the heart of the Lord. In other words Daya takes birth in the Lord's heart. That is shown by the the use of the word *Jayaase*, you are born. For our *Shreyas* or glory and benefit you are born. Swayam—you take birth of your own accord, not even at our request or prayer. Unsolicited, you take shape and work for our good by capturing Sreenivasa; and thereby our fears in regard to release from samsara or the cycle of birth and death get loosened and ultimately lost. Even for me there is thus hope of safety and security.

अवतरणविशेषैरात्मलीलापदेशै-
रवमतिमनुकम्पे मन्दचित्तेषु विन्दन् ।
वृषभशिखरिनाथस्त्वन्निदेशेन नूनं
भजति शरणभाजां भाविनो जन्मभेदान् ॥ (३५)

Avatarana viseshaihi atmaleelaapadesaihi
Avamatim anukampe! mandachitteshu vindan ।
Vrishabhashikari nathaha tvannidesena noonam
Bhajati Sharana bhaajaam bhaavino janmabhedhaan ॥ (35)

Anukampa! the great Lord of Vrishabha Hill, at your behest and on your command, takes on several different births in this world, which series of births should really be undergone by those who have become His Saranaagataas. And He pretends to do so out of His sportive instinct; (far from being praised for this vicarious act of nobility) He receives nothing but disregard disrespect and contempt at the hands of the foolish.

Every deed must receive its reward or punishment. So where the several and countless *janmaas* (births) of the individual soul which that soul must have taken in order to enjoy the fruits of its actions, are wiped out by the gracious intervention of Daya, someone must in the place of that soul take those births. Daya ordains that the Lord Himself should do so. And in obedience to that command the Lord takes several births or avataaraas in this world. As He does so on the initiation and at the instigation of Daya, these avataaraas of the Lord are Daya-kaarya, or the work of Daya. They are also dictated by Leela or sport. The Lord is born not because of karma but out of His own sweet will and pleasure.

And He enjoys His births and avataaraas. So they are also due to the sportive instinct in Him. But as the immediate cause of the avataara is Daya, sport becomes a secondary and auxiliary cause and so is referred to here as an apadesa—pretext. It redounds to the Lord's greatness that He takes those several janmaas in spite of the fact that fools (referred to as मूढाः in the Gita) do not understand Him aright—(अवजानन्ति) but begin to abuse and despise Him. That is referred to in this sloka by the words Avamatim and vindan.

The lives to come for those who give themselves up to the Lord (Sharana-bhaajaam) are undergone by the Lord at the dictate of Daya. In their case it would have been a punishment and a banishment; but in the case of the Lord it is a leela, sport.

By the use of the word 'noonam' the poet signifies that it is really so, and incidentally indicates that it is an utpreksha—nice poetical fancy.

परहितमनुकम्पे भावयन्त्यां भवत्यां
स्थिरमनुपधि हार्दं श्रीनिवासो दधानः ।
ललितरुचिषु लक्ष्मी भूमिनीलासु नूनं
प्रथयति बहुमानं त्वत्प्रतिच्छन्दबुद्ध्या ॥ (३६)

Parahitam Anukampe! bhaavayantyaam bhavatyaam
Sthiram anupadhi haardam Sreenivaso dadhaanaha ।
Lalita ruchishu Lakshmee Bhoomi-Neelasu noonam
Prathayati bahumaanam twatpratichchandabudhya ॥ (36)

Devi Anukampa! Lord Sreenivasa who bears permanent and spontaneous love towards you who always think of the welfare and well-being of others, displays great regard towards His Consorts Lakshmi Devi, Bhoodevi and Neeladevi of attractive brilliance and glory, only because He thinks that they are reflections (images) of you.

Lest the reader should get the idea that the Lord may get vexed with Daya Devi for compelling Him to suffer the indignities of avataara as indicated in the previous sloka, the poet hastens in this sloka to postulate the great regard that He has towards Daya. And he does it with remarkable effect by pointing out that the Lord's great regard for, and love towards, His Consorts are really the outcome of His noticing and appreciating the great quality of Daya in Them.

The Lord's fondness towards Daya is *anupadhi*, unconditioned, not due to any cause; spontaneous. Daya by nature is ever and anon mindful of para-hitam or the welfare and well-being of others. *Para* will indicate not only others but also enemies. It is Daya's great quality that she will think of, and act for, the welfare of even enemies of the Lord. As her name employed in this sloka Anukampa (sympathy) indicates, she shudders over in line with the sufferer. That the Lord's *Haardam*, love or fondness, is also eternal, permanent, is indicated by the word *sthiram*.

Ruchi is kanti or lustre. Lalita-ruchi is charming or elegant and pleasing lustre. The Lord's consorts—Lakshmi, Bhoomi and Neela—possess charm and lustre in a preeminent degree. In fact Lakshmi stands for Soundarya, Laavanya and all auspicious forms. But it is pointed out here, the Lord likes them most not because of that quality of theirs but because in His opinion, to His eyes, they appear to be reflections of Daya Devi. The Lord looks upon His consorts as images (prati-bimbhas) of Daya and therefore He manifests *prathayati* His *bahumaanam* or high esteem towards them. In the first decad of this stotra we saw Desika dealing with these three Consorts of the Lord in Slokas 6, 7 and 8 and demonstrating how they really help in the redemption of the human soul which is Daya's special merit.

Daya being an attribute has really no body of her own. Lakshmi, Bhoomi and Neela have lustrous roopa or form. And yet the Lord's great love towards them is traceable not to their beauty and elegance but to their possessing in common with Daya the trait of redeeming souls in distress. That is why the Lord's fondness for Daya is said to be *anupadhi*—causeless, and it is at the same time pointed out that Lakshmi and the other two consorts are held in high esteem because of their emulating Daya in the process of divinising human souls. The use of the word 'noonam' meaning 'indeed' shows that the poet is again indulging in an *utpreksha*.

वृषगिरिसविधेषु व्याजतो वासभाजां
दुरितकलुषितानां दूयमाना दये त्वम् ।
करणविलयकाले कान्दिशीकस्मृतीनां
स्मरयसि बहुलीलं माधवं सावधाना ॥ (३७)

Vrishagiri savidheshu vyaajato vaasa bhaajaam
durita kalushitaanaam dooyamaanaa Daye! tvam ।
Karana vilayakaale Kaandisheekasmruteenaam
smarayasi bahuleelam Maadhavam saavadhaanaa ॥ (37)

Daya Devi! Being distressed by the plight of persons stained by sins who happen to reside in the proximity of Tirumala Hill on some pretext or other, you with great care and attention remind the ever sportful Madhava about them when they are *in extremis*, bereft of thought and memory, and when their faculties have all faded away.

Having described in the previous four slokas what the Lord does at Daya's behest for us, in this and the next three slokas, the Poet proceeds to indicate how Daya helps us in the process of redeeming us. This sloka describes how during our last moments, when death is creeping over us, Daya reminds the Lord about us and secures for us His grace and bounty.

Based on the Gita Sloka beginning यं यं वापि स्मरन् 'Yam Yam Vaapi smaran' (VIII—6) a theory has been adopted in several quarters that unless a man thinks of the Lord when he quits this body, he cannot attain Moksha. One can easily envisage how owing to several reasons a man may be unable to think of God at that particular moment. Vide the Mukunda Mala Sloka in which that poet seeks to take shelter at the feet of the Lord here and now, since it may become impossible later when *kapha vaata* and *Pitha* crush the body and make *smarana* or remembrance impossible. Periyalvar has also sung to the same effect by saying—' I may not be able to think of you when I leave this body and therefore I mention to you even now in advance.' This antima-smriti (or remembrance of God during the last moments of our life) as it is called, is regarded as a *sine qua non* for the attainment of Mukti. In this sloka Desika refers to this and very nicely reconciles the divergent viewpoints about it. Antima smriti literally means remembering at the very end. This remembrance may be the individual soul's or it may be the Lord's. In the Varaha Purana it has been said by the Lord Himself

ततस्तम् म्रियमाणन्तु काष्ठपाषाण सन्निभम् ।
अहं स्मरामि मद्भक्तं नयामिपरमां गतिम् ॥

" When my bhakta is about to die and lies prostrate and inert like a stone or log of wood. I remember him and lead him to the highest bliss." This is the Lord's *smriti* or remembrance at the *antimadasa*, or last moment, of the chetana. There has been some difference of opinion whether antima smriti, meaning thereby the chetana's remembrance during his last moments, is necessary even in the case of a prapanna. Some say that it is totally unnecessary. Others say that the Lord will infuse into the prapanna a thought of Him during the last moments and thereby satisfy that condition for the attainment of mukti. This problem is very nicely solved, or rather dissolved by Desika here, by saying that we can be certain of His remembering us during our last moments. And any day His remembrance of us is likely to be more effective and fruitful than our remembrance of Him.

This sloka tells us that Daya Devi it is that is responsible for making the Lord remember us in our last moments. He is a *bahuleela*—one interested in several sports or activities. He is prone to forget. But Daya Devi with great care reminds Him about us at the psychological moment and makes Him remember us.

But this blessing in the shape of the Lord's thinking of us at that moment (ஆவிசரிந்து போம்போது as Nammalwar has put it) will be available only if we happen to pass into eternity in some place near Tirumala Hill. Inspite of being tainted by sins, if a man resides in the vicinity of Tirumala, thereby he becomes the object of Daya Devi's care and affection. When Daya finds him in that state with his memory gone, his faculties lost, jus existing as a log of wood or stone, her compassion for him is rouse and at once she reminds the Lord and makes Him remember th poor man in that wretched plight. That she does it with grea care and attention is shown by the word '*saavadhaanaa*'—wit diligent attention.

The two references to the Lord here are 'bahuleelam' an 'Maadhavam'—multisportive, and Consort of Sri. While He is en- grossed in His *jagat-vyaapaara* or world-management, Daya Dev succeeds in drawing His attention to one poor mortal who is abou to breathe his last. And He is Madhava, the Lord of Sri. Togethe He and Lakshmi take care of the soul of the dying man and lea it safely to eternal bliss.

दिशि दिशि गतिविद्भिर्देशिकैर्नीयमाना स्थिरतरमनुकम्पे स्त्यानलग्ना गुणैस्त्वम् ।
परिगतवृषशैलं पारमारोपयन्ती भवजलधिगतानां पोतपात्री भवित्री ॥ (३८

Disidisigatividbhihi Desikayarneeyamaanaa
Sthirataram Anukampe! styaanalagnaagunaistvam ।
Parigata Vrishasailam paaram aaropayantee
bhavajaladhidi gataanaam potapaatree bhavitree ॥ (38)

Anukampa Devi! you are like a boat carrying mortals immersed in the ocean of Samsara safely to the shore. Like the boat that is steered by persons well-acquainted with the routs over the seas in all directions, you are led by Acharyas who know all the means prescribed by the Sastras. Like the boat that is tightly fastened together by sturdy ropes, you are entwined steadfastly with the great gunas of the Lord. Like the boat that takes people through the water to the shore, you take those struggling in the ocean of Samsara to the shore known as Lord Srinivasa in (near) Vrishasaila.

As in sloka 18 *ante*. Sri Vedanta Desika employs *sleshaaiamkara* in this sloka. Daya devi is likened to a boat. The boat is navigated by desikas. The term ' desika ' connotes one who is familiar with paths and places, also a guide. Desika of course also means a guru. an Acharya, a preceptor. In the case of the ordinary boat, it has to be, and is safely navigated by experienced persons who know the way intimately and can be relied upon to guide the boat in every necessary direction—disi disi. In the case of Daya she is taken to individuals by Acharyas who are well-acquainted with the several paths prescribed for spiritual progress.

Taking the constitution of the boat, a boat is made of planks firmly bound together by strong ropes. Guna means a rope. It also means an attribute. Daya is firmly tied to the other gunas of the Lord. This has been already pointed out in Slokas 11 and 15. The close association of Daya with the other attributes of the Lord is once again emphasised by the poet here.

A boat is needed for carrying persons across the water. Those who stand in need of Daya are persons desiring to cross the ocean of Samsara. In fact they are persons struggling in the sea and their craving for a boat to take them to land must be more keen than the desire of persons to cross the sea from one shore to another. *Paaram* means shore. Here the shore of safety to the chetana drowned in Samsara is only the Lord. This shore of Srinivasa is *parigata vrishasaila*, *i.e.*, one who has come to Vrishasaila. Normally a boat can land only at a place level with the water. Where Daya Devi is the boat she can not only make us land in safety, but also raise us to high places like Tirumala. The term *aaropayantee* if given its full meaning will indicate not only getting out of water into the land slightly higher, but also elevating a person to great heights.

The term *Vishnupota* must be very familiar to students of Mukundamala. Andal has also referred to the Lord as a தோணி—a Tamil word conveying the same meaning as the Sanskrit word *pota* (a boat, a vessel, a ship). Here Desika refers to Daya as the boat and the Lord as the shore to be reached with the aid of that boat.

That Daya is accessible and available only to those who obtain the blessing of a Guru or Acharya is very nicely suggested by the first paada of the sloka.

परिमितफलसङ्गात्प्राणिनः किंपचाना
    निगमविपणिमध्ये नित्यमुक्तानुषक्तम् ।
प्रसदनमनुकम्पे प्राप्तवत्या भवत्या
    वृषगिरिहरिनीलं व्यञ्जितं निर्विशन्ति ॥ (३९)

Parimita phalasangaat praaninah kimpachanaaha
    nigama vipanimadhye nityamuktaanushaktam ।
Prasadanam Anukampe! praaptavatyaa bhavatyaa
    Vrishagiri Harineelam vyanjitam nirvisanti ॥ (39)

Devi Anukampa! To the small-minded beings, desirous of obtaining low and limited enjoyments, at the vast market place called the Vedas, you, ever full of favour and good disposition (towards them), show (point out) the great blue Saphire shining in close association with pearls; and highly pleased with it they enjoy it.

Beautiful sloka. The Vedas constitute a vast and expansive market place in which one can purchase anything one wants. It is not given to everyone to go in for superior and valuable articles. Most of us are content with objects yielding small and evanascent pleasures. If while strolling through that big bazaar we happen to get into touch with lofty and noble minded persons, they change our tastes for the better and take us to shops therein where we can get valuable and precious goods. This analogy is pressed into service by the poet here. The Vedas postulate several objects of human desire and lay down rules and regulations for attaining each one of them. *Alpa phalaas* and *asthiraphalaas*–small fruits and evanescent fruits—are there in plenty. There is also the peerless pleasure of Divine enjoyment for which the Vedas show the way. We have been too long associated with the body and the senses and we have begun to believe that only the pleasures of the body and the senses are pleasures worth having. We therefore get attached to those parimita phalas, or fruits limited in enjoyment. The word *kimpachaanaah* denotes our niggardliness even in regard to desires. Not being able to look aloft, we hanker for silly and stupid things. If perchance while going round the bazaar we come across a great personality imbued with a desire to cure us of our small-mindedness and to make us desire for the lofty things of the Spirit, he will take us to another portion of the bazaar where the wares exhibited will be attractive and elevating articles. Taken there we begin to crave for those articles and the pleasures they can afford us. The desire for small things disappears and the taste for great things is roused in us. This is exactly what happens to one who seeks the aid of Daya Devi to obtain the proper goods at the market place of the Vedas. She is always *prasadanam praptavtyaa*—imbued with a tendency to shower favours on us. If we go to her and ask for her help to obtain some small pleasures, she corrects our desires and sublimates them into a hankering for eternal communion with the most beautiful and gracious Lord. The Lord is referred to as the blue sapphire in this sloka—Harineela. Neela is blue sapphire. The term Hari has several meanings. Here it is given the meaning Indra. Harineela means Indraneela—a blue sapphire *nonpareil* (without equal). This sapphire shines supreme amongst a setting of pearls. The words nitya-muktaanushaktam means eternally combined with pearls. It also means living jointly with *nityas* and *muktas* who are celestial beings residing in Paramapada—the abode of eternal Bliss.

In the 37th sloka Daya's help in reminding God about us was referred to. In the next sloka her rescuing us from the sea of samsara and landing us safely at the feet of the Lord was referred to. In this sloka the poet deals with that superior trait of Dayadevi which cleanses us of low thoughts and ideas and helps us to desire for God Himself. Incidentally Vrishagiri is equated with Paramapada and the Hari or Vishnu of that place shown to be a *nityaamuktaanushakta* or One eternally served by nityas like Ananta Garuda and Vishwaksena as also by the Muktas or souls released from bondage, *i e.*, chetanas who once were wallowing in Samsara but have now become celestials by the Grace (Daya) of God.

त्वयि बहुमतिहीनः श्रीनिवासानुकम्पे जगति गतिमिहान्यां देवि संमन्यते यः ।
स खलु विबुधसिन्धौ संनिकर्षे वहन्त्यां शमयति मृगतृष्णावीचिकाभिः पिपासाम् ॥

Tvayi bahumatiheenah Sreenivaasaanukampe!
Jagati gatim ihaanyaam Devi! sammanyate yaha ।
Sakhalu vibudha sindhau sannikarshe vahantyaam
Samayati mrigatrishnaaveechikaabhih pipaasaam ॥ (40)

Anukampa of Srinivasa! Devi! He, who, in this world, having no regard for you, thinks highly of other means (or ends) will be quenching his thirst by the waves of the mirage when the clestial Ganges flows nearby.

The excellence of the Lord which surpasses all else—(sarva bhogyaatisaayee)—was very well brought about by the previous sloka. It is emphasised here once again by pointing out the stupidity of a person who accepts smaller things when He is willing and ready to make Himself available through the intervention of Daya.

A particular idea is sought to be impressed on the reader by eminent poets and philosophers both positively and negatively which is known as the anvaya method and vyatireka method respectively.

It was pointed out in the previous sloka that by contacting Daya, one's desires themselves become ennobled and the aim and goal of human life get pitched high. In this sloka is described the true state of a person who rejecting Daya's help, craves for other ends or for help from other quarters. He is likened to one seeking to quench his thirst by the waters of the mirage. Mirage as is well known is an apparition which gives the impression of water flowing at a distance. It is a mere optical illusion caused by the refractive effect of hot and cold air at a distance, very often simulating the appearance of water. It is called *mrigatrishnika* because animals, stags and deer, are wont to be deceived by this illusion and run after the imagined water to quench their thirst.

A man is terribly thirsty. Within a few feet from where he is, the divine Ganga flows majestically with plenty of water, a mouthful of which will quench his thirst. But he will not go to the Ganga; the distant mirage attracts his eyes, and he runs towards it, lured by the wavy waters that he imagines to exist there. That is an exact description of the state of one who rejecting the certain benefits proferred by Daya, who is near at hand, hankers for imagined benefits to be obtained from other sources. The bounty of Daya Devi is certain and is sure to obtain for us everlasting good. It is up to us therefore to approach her and obtain those benefits. Let us not emulate the man whose pitiable mentality is so forcefully portrayed in this Sloka, who will not touch the water that is available, but will run after water that does not exist.

The decad thus ends by emphasising the cussedness and stupidity of persons who will not accept the help proferred by Daya, and the merit and cleverness of those who with her help obtain the highest pleasures that a human soul can ever crave for. This idea grows into the next decad as we shall see.

श्रीमते निगमान्तमहादेशिकाय नमः
श्री श्रीनिवास परब्रह्मणे नमः

॥ दयाशतकम् ॥

DAYAA SATAKAM

FIFTH DECAD.

AS the Stotra grows in intensity and fervour, the metres employed for each decad can also be seen to grow in volume and cadence. From the fifth to the ninth decad the five different metres employed in them are all 17 lettered. We start with MANDAAKRAANTA in this decad.

The topic also grows. SREYASTADDHETU DAATA is Desika's topic for the fifth centurium of verse in Nammalwar's Tiruvoimozhi. The ninth sloka in this decad starts with the word " SREYASSOOTIM " definitely and unambiguously indicating the adoption of the said topic for this decad. Let us see what that " SREYAS " is, and what it is that furnishes us the means to attain the same.

आज्ञां ख्यातिं धनमनुचरानाधिराज्यादिकं वा
काले दृष्ट्वा कमलवसतेरप्यकिंचित्कराणि ।
पद्माकान्तं प्रणिहितवतीं पालनेऽनन्यसाध्ये
साराभिज्ञा जगति कृतिनः संश्रयंते दये त्वाम् ॥ (४१)

Aagnaam Khyaatim dhanam anucharaan aadhiraajyaadikam vaa
Kaale drishtvaa Kamalavasterapi akinchit karaani ।
Padmaakaantam pranihitavateem paalane ananyasaadhye
saaraabhignaah jagati kritinah samsrayante Daye! tvaam ॥ (41)

Dayadevi/ Seeing (realising) that power, fame, wealth, retinue and even kingdoms, even though they are of the Resider in the Lotus (four-faced Brahma) are apt to get reduced to nothing at times, the

blessed and the fortunate in this world, who know the essence of things, resort to you, who enjoin Srinivasa to take to the act of protection—an act which no one else can perform or take to.

In sloka 39 above Desika referred to 'Parimitaphalas.' This sloka refers to Brahma the Creator and points out how the power, fame, wealth etc., appertaining to his position are all impermanent, certain as they are to come to an end at some point of time. The highest *Sthana* or place in the cosmic hierarchy is that of Brahma. If his position itself is precarious, what about ours? *Aagnaa* refers to position and power-wielding influence,–exercising command and enforcing obedience. *Khyaati* is fame. *Dhanam* is of course wealth. By the term *Anucharaan* is indicated the large retinue of servants and others ready to obey the commands and carry out the behests of the person in power. *Aadhirajyam* connotes a great empire, the ruler of which will have several kings and kingdoms under him. Several devas and several men can claim to possess all these vestiges of soveriegnty. By indicating that all these, even if they appertain to Brahma, get reduced to nothing on certain occasions and at certain times, the poet wants us to understand that, if this be the case with Brahma, how much more impermanent, nay, how much more evanescent, will be the power, fame and wealth of others lower down in the hierarchy.

Power, fame wealth etc., may be alluring and attractive to the majority of men and women in the world. But they fail to make any impression upon the *Kritinah*, the blessed among men. Because they are *Saaraabhignaaha*, persons who have analysed things for themselves and found out the true *Saara* or essence. The great saints of this country like Prahlada and Nammalwar are evidently in Desika's mind here. Scorning all the wealth of all the worlds, Prahlaada prayed only for Bhakti towards the Lord. Nammalwar in one place says that power and position pertaining to high places in this world or the next, will not be cared for by great persons who have inordinate love towards the Lord's feet. Even if mastery over all the three worlds is offered to such great souls, they will never regard that offer as worth considering (கொள்ளுவது எண்ணுமோ).

Kaale-akinchitkaraani-drishtvaa—Seeing how at times they become worthless. We find from the Puranas, how Brahma was robbed of the Vedas and all his other wealth by Asuras like

Madhu and *Kaitapa*. Even without that, as there is not the positive content of divine enjoyment in the enjoyment of the *Brahmapatta*, or the titular greatness of Brahma, there is nothing that can tempt the true devotee of God. For all these reasons the '*Kritinah*' never set their mind or eye upon pomp and splendour.

What is it that they do? They seek you. Why? Because you have the power to enjoin the great Lord who is the Consort of Sri to afford true and lasting protection to your, and therefore His, devotees. That protection or *Paalana* is *Ananyasaadhya*,—not available with any one else. Srinivasa alone is the able protector of all the worlds. *Saranaagata-Rakshana* or the protection of Saranaagatas is in the exclusive province of Lord Srinivasa. So the wise rely on His Daya or mercy and the protection He extends to those who look up to Him for help.

प्राजापत्यप्रभृतिविभवं प्रेक्ष्य पर्यायदुःखं
  जन्माकाङ्क्षन्वृषगिरिवने जग्मुषां तस्थुषां वा ।
आशासानाः कतिचन विभोस्त्वत्परिष्वङ्गधन्यै-
  रङ्गीकारं क्षणमपि दये हार्दतुङ्गैरपाङ्गैः ॥ (४२)

Praajaapatyaprabhriti vibhavam prekshya paryaayadukham
  Janmaakaankshan vrishagirivane jagmushaam tastushaam vaa ।
Aasaasaanah katichana vibhoh tvatparishvanga dhanyaihi
  Angeekaaram kshanamapi Daye! haardatungairapaangaihi ॥ (42)

Daya Devi! Realising that the glory of Prajaapati (Brahma) and others is really a synonym for grief, the (fortunate) few desirous of securing, albeit for a fleeting moment, the Lord's love-laden Kataaksha blessed by your embrace, crave for existence as an animate or inanimate object in the forests of Vrishagiri.

Talking about the Saarabhignaha in the previous sloka brings to the mind of the poet the rare mystic experiences of such great souls as Kulasekharalwar, who prayed for existence in Tirumalai in some form or another, animate or inanimate. The uselessness of *Brahmapadavi* as realised by those Kritinah (blessed men) is reiterated in the opening paada of this Sloka, where the *vibhavam* or glory of Brahma and others is equated to *dukkham* or misery. Spurning those so called high positions they yearn for some form of life on the Tirumala Hill. They are not keen about any particular form of life. So long as they are assured of contact with the sacred

Hill they are thoroughly indifferent to the nature of the connection or contact. *Jagmushaam* is mobile, moveable, *Tasthushaam* is immobile, immoveable. Whether as moveable objects like a bird, a fish, a human being or champaka plant, or immoveable objects like a pathway, a hill crest, or a step (படி) Kulasekhara has sung about his desire for existence in Tiruvengadam. The indifference to the form is reflected in the penultimate verse of that impassioned decad of this Alwar in praise of Tirumalai where he exclaims எம்பெருமான் பொன்மலைமேல் ஏதேனும் ஆவேனே (I shall like to become anything on the golden Hill of my Lord.)

Why is it that such great men evince this sort of desire? Desika explains it by pointing out that they are prompted by their great desire to be the recipient of one gracious glance or *Kataaksha* issuing out of those merciful and beautiful eyes of the Lord. Apaanga means a glance, a look. That look is *haardatunga*—affection-laden. Even a more beautiful sentiment given expression to here about the Lord's glances or *Kataaksha* is found in the words *Tvatparishvanga-Dhanyaihi*—meaning ennobled by your embrace, referring to Dayadevi. This is a very favourite theme with Vedanta Desika. Innumerable are the places in his stotras where he refers to the benign Kataaksha of the Lord as at once sanctified and beautified by close contact with Daya or mercy. In the Gopala Vimsati the Lord's *apaangas* are referred to as lotuses blossoming in the stream of *Anukampaa* (annukampaasarit ambujairapaangaihi). In the Dehalisa Stuti they are referred to as Dayaabharitairapaangaihi. It is *ativela dayottarangam* in Devanayaka Panchasat.

Renouncing the seeming glory and splendour of all other forms of existence including the status of Brahma, Siva, Indra, and so on, the great devotees of the Lord crave for some form of life connected with the sacred Hill of Tirumala just for the purpose of being able to receive, albeit for a short while, even for a fleeting moment, the gracious Kataaksha emanating from the lovely eyes of Lord Srinivasa. Readers would have noticed pointed reference having been made to Lord Srinivasa's Kataaksha in several earlier Slokas such as 19 and 20. We shall take the opportunity towards the end of the decad, where in two successive slokas Desika refers to the same Kataaksha, to look deeper into the significance of the several references.

नाभीपद्मस्फुरणसुभगा नव्यनीलोत्पलाभा
क्रीडाशैलं कमपि करुणे वृण्वती वेङ्कटाख्यम् ।
शीता नित्यं प्रसदनवती श्रद्दधानावगाह्या
दिव्या काचिज्जयति महती दीर्घिका तावकीना ॥ (४३)

Naabhee padma sphurana subhagaa Navyaneelotpalaabhaa
Kreedaa-sailam Kamapi Karune! vrinvatee venkataakhyam ।
Seeta nityam prasadanavatee sraddadhaanaavagaahyaa
Divyaa kaachit jayati mahatee deerghikaa taavakeenaa ॥ (43)

Devi Karuna! A long and lovely lake belonging to you shines glorious and effulgent in (your) pleasure-mountain, called Venkatadri. It is beautified by a lotus in its navel. It has the attractive beauty of just blossomed blue lilies. It is ever cool. It is ever clear and pellucid. It is capable of being bathed in by those who have sraddha or faith. It is celestial and big.

'Sreyas' meaning bliss or beatitude is described in this and the succeeding sloka in two different forms. Its attractiveness is dealt with in this sloka, and its superiority over all other pleasures, in the next one. The Lord who is that 'Sreyas' is likened to a long and lovely lake. The simile or *upama* is carried into minute details. A lake is beautified by lotus flowers in its centre. *Naabhee* meaning navel indicates centre. Applied to the Lord, the lotus sprouting from His navel (naabhee padmam) beautifies the person of the Lord. The beauty caused by the effulgence of that lotus makes the Lord's form lovely and attractive. Like the lotus, the blue lily also is a water flower and such flowers abound in lakes. Lord Srinivasa's beautiful form is blue like the blue lilies. The words 'navya neelotpalaabhaa' indicate the lustre of fresh blown blue-lilies. The freshness is as precious as the blueness to the devotee. The freshness added to the blueness increases the devotees' enjoyment. The aptness of the term 'navya neelotpalaabhaa' will be enjoyed by every devotee of Lord Srinivasa who is privileged to worship Him on a Friday evening after Abhishekam and alankaram. He will simply be stunned at the freshness and loveliness of the Lord. Ever fresh and lovely, He will appear more fresh and lovely than usual then. Valmiki describes Rama in one place as "Prabuddha Neelotpala tulya darsanaha." The Alwars very often grow mad over the freshness and loveliness of the Lord's blue form. All that enjoyment is compressed by Desika into the one beautiful phrase Navya Neeloptalaabhaa.

The next attribute describing the beauty of the lake on the one hand and of the Lord on the other in the form of Slesha is seetaa nityam (शीता नित्या:),—ever cool. Just like a man who has walked a long distance in the hot midday sun loves to take a plunge into the cool waters of a neighbouring lake, we mortals, scorched by the *taapatraya*, or threefold heat, look forward to a dip into the cool and refreshing reservoir that is Lord Srinivasa. In the Devanayaka panchasat Desika sings about ग्रीष्मे तटाकमिव शीत मनुप्रविष्टा " greeshme tataakamiva seetamanupravishtaa."

The word 'nityam' can be annexed not only to the word 'seeta' that precedes it, but also to 'prasadanavatee' that comes after. 'Prasadana' in reference to the lake means clearness, transparency. In reference to the Lord it connotes His quality of being pleased and gracious. Lord Srinivasa is described by this term as being ever kind and gracious.

The next epithet is *sraddadhaanaavagaahyaa*,—capable of being bathed in by those who desire to do so with faith and fervour. The Lord similarly is to be enjoyed by those who have sraddhaa or faith in His Grace, and who feel attracted by His beauty. This epithet seems to be a literal translation of the expression நீராடப் போதுவீர் போதுமினோ in the first verse of Goda's Tiruppavai. Those words mean, "those who are desirous of taking a bath, please come forward." The bath, she is referring to, is the same as what is being described in this sloka by Desika.—a bath in the *Hari-saras* (Hari-tank) as Mukundamaalaa will have it. No qualification or condition precedent need be acquired or fulfilled to approach God; only there must be a keen and intensive desire to immerse oneself in God.

Three one word epithets follow—*divyaa*, *kaachit*, and *mahatee*—each of them applicable to the lake and to the Lord alike. 'Divya' means excellent as applied to the lake, and divine or celestial as applied to the Lord. 'Kaachit' implies indescribability, which applies equally to the lake the poet is thinking of, as also to the Lord whom he is praising. 'Mahatee' means big. This also applies both to the lake and to the Lord.

Deerghikaa;—a lake, a longish lake usually. This idea of describing the Lord as a huge reservoir has been expressed by several devotees. Nammalwar, in one of his impassioned songs, prays to the Lord to come walking towards him like a தாமரை நீள் வாசத்தடம் a long lotus-bearing and fragrant tank, or lake. He describes in full detail such a tank; and Desika follows that method here. The Mukundamala sloka beginning with the words 'Karacharana saroje' also describes in meticulous detail the several aspects or parts of the Harisaras or Vishnu tank. Needless to cite other similar passages. Great souls revel in similar sentiments and even identical language at times.

Desika refers to this *saras* or *deerghikaa* as Daya devi's property or possession. The Tirumala Hill is her pleasure-resort,—*kreedaa-sailam.* This deerghikaa, or lake, is part of that hill and is shown here to be the exclusive property of Dayadevi.

A very beautiful sloka, scintillating with literary beauty and divine fragrance. Who will not feel attracted after reading this sloka to visit Tirumala and to immerse himself in the ever fresh, the ever-fragrant, and ever cool beauty and grace of Lord Srinivasa?

यस्मिन्दृष्टे तदितरसुखैर्गम्यते गोष्पदत्वं
सत्यं ज्ञानं त्रिभिरवधिभिर्मुक्तमानन्दसिन्धुम् ।
त्वत्स्वीकारात्तमिह कृतिनः सूरिबृन्दानुभाव्यं
नित्यापूर्वं निधिमिव दये निर्विशन्त्यञ्जनाद्रौ ॥ (४४)

Yasmin drishte taditarasukhaih gamyate goshpadatvam
Satyam gnaanam tribhir avadhibhirmuktam aanandasindhum ।
Tvatsveekaaraat tam iha kritinah sooribrindaanubhaavyam
nityaapoorvam nidhimiva Daye! nirvisanti Anjanaadrau ॥ (44)

Daya Devi! The blessed, by being the recipient of your favours, enjoy Him like a great treasure even here on the Tirumala Hill—Him, by seeing whom all other pleasures get likened to a small puddle (as contrasted with the ocean); Him, who is satyam (Truth), gnaanam (knowledge), who is free from the threefold limitations, who is an ocean of Bliss (Ananda), who is being enjoyed by groups of Nityasooris, and Who is ever new and fresh.

The Roopa or Divyamangala Vigraha of the Lord was described in the previous sloka. The Svaroopa (the fundamental nature) of the Lord is described in this sloka. The words employed are almost all of them taken from the Upanishads.

The main purport of the sloka is that those whom Daya devi takes up for protection, are privileged to enjoy the infinite Lord with all His infinite qualities even while on this earth. The Upanishadic " *amrita iha bhavati.*" (He becomes immortal even in this world) is elaborated here. The very opening words of the sloka " Yasmin drishte " are reminiscent of the Upanishadic mantra " Tasmin drishte paraavare." They also remind one of Rukmini Devi's classical expression in her epistle to Lord Sri Krishna— " roopam drisaam drisimataam akhilaartha laabham." The infinite Bliss that one attains by having a glimpse of the Para Brahman far surpasses all known pleasures. This sentiment is expressed by saying that all known pleasures dwindle into a very small puddle when set off against Brahmaananda, which is like a vast ocean.

Goshpadatvam—the state of being as small as the space occupied by a cow's foot. Goshpada has also come to mean the small quantity of water needed to fill the impression of a cow's foot on loose soil. Compare *goshpadee krita vaaraasim* sung in praise of Hanuman. Goshpada has thus come to signify a small puddle.

Taittiriya Upanishad has defined the Para Brahmam as Satyam Gnaanam and Anantam. The first two words of the second pada of this sloka are taken from there and indicate those two Parabrahma-lakshanas or the indicia of Parabrahman. The next epithet ' tribhir avadhibhir muktam ' is explanatory of the significance of " Anantam " and indicates freedom from the three kinds of limitations, known as limitation as to space (Desa parichcheda) limitation as to time (Kaala parichcheda) and limitation as to matter (Vastu parichcheda).

Next comes " Aanandasindhum "—the ocean of Ananda or bliss. This refers to the aanandamaya of the Upanishad, referred to in the 13th sutra of the Brahma-sutras. As the term Aanandamaya has been variously interpreted, (and even misinterpreted) by various commentators, an unambiguous word is employed here by the poet to show that the Parabrahman is an ocean of Bliss or Ananda, and not devoid of content as some will have it. Incidentally it will be noticed that whereas the body of the Lord was referred to in the previous Sloka as a lake or reservoir, the *Svaroopa* is indicated here to be an ocean. This sloka deals with the divyaatmasvarupa of the Parabrahman. The previous sloka dealt with His Divya Mangala Vigraha.

Having described the essential nature or quality of the Supreme Godhead in and by the first half of the sloka, the poet proceeds in the latter half of it to show how that Being becomes the object of enjoyment of the chosen few, even while on this earth. Here also the Upanishadic way of stating things is adopted. " Iha nirvisanti " gives the meaning of the Upanishadic words " Amrita iha bhavati."

Who are they that obtain such a lofty enjoyment even in this world? The answer is furnished by the words " tvat-sveekaaraat-kritinaha "-those blessed by your adoption of them as your chosen favourites. They rely on you for everything and you therefore bestow on them the highest bliss,-the enjoyment of celestial pleasures on earth. This is indicated by the words " *Sooribrindaanubhavyam* " and " *iha*." Sooris are the celestials in Paramapada or Vaikunta. They are either Nityas or Muktas as shown above (Sloka 39). *Brinda* means a crowd or large gathering. What is capable of being enjoyed by such groups is given to be enjoyed here (iha) by the denizens of this world.

Nityaapoorvam points to yet another special excellence of the Lord. Ever new and ever fresh, He never becomes stale and so every moment's enjoyment is but a prelude to the next moment's enjoyment. There is no satiation, though there is immense satisfaction. Though He is a Puraana-purusha, old personality, He is ever fresh. Koorattalvaan sings about this as " Sadaatanatvepi tadaatanatvavat " (though ever existing, fresh like one just come into existence). Desika has cryptically put it here as " Nityaapoorvam." Apoorvam is what was not before. Eternally the Lord is capable of being enjoyed as one who was never before, but has just come into being freshly just now. The Alvar's expression of this sentiment is contained in the following words அப்பொழுதைக்கப்பொழுது என் ஆரா அமுதமே (from time to time, ever and anon, my unsatiating nectar). The nearest Sanskrit word to Aaraavamudam is " aasechanaka,"-ever charming, always drenching you in enjoyment. That is Nityaapoorva.

The Kritinah or the blessed ones who are the recipients of Daya Devi's favour are thus enabled to enjoy in Anjanaadri (Tirumala) the bliss of the celestials.

" *Anjanaadrau-nidhim-iva-nirvisanti*—This reminds us of another Upanishad which describes the great Lord as a Nidhi or Treasure concealed underneath a place over which one walks frequently without ever being able to visualise it. It is believed that some rare *anjana* (black paste known as collyrium used to adorn the eyes) enables one to discover such hidden treasures. Here we have an Anjanaadri,—a whole hill of such anjana, and no wonder people get that *anjana* by Daya's grace and discover the great *nidhi* or treasure that is Parabrahman in the form of Lord Srinivasa. The Divya Mangala Vigraha of Lord Srinivasa is the anjana that helps one to discover and fully comprehend the Divyaatmasvaroopa of that great Lord. This idea of the Archa form acting as an aid to the discovery and realisation of the svaroopa or nature of the Lord, which even the srutis describe as ununderstandable in several places, is dealt with by Desika in sloka 28 of his Varadaraja Panchasat, where the same simile regarding *nidhi* and *anjana* is also employed.

This and the previous sloka have postulated Parabrahman as having a form and as having attributes, and as capable of being enjoyed,—a thorough contrast to the Brahman of the Advaitins, which is nameless, formless, and attributeless in the ultimate, though on the *vyaavahaaric* plane names and forms and attributes are conceded to that Brahman itself.

Desika also shows here what true Jeevanmukti or the realisation of the highest mokshananda is. Though that term is employed only by the Advaitins to describe the state of a released soul before he sheds his body, the full meaning of the term is realised only by realising the state of great souls like Nammalvar who have put themselves in tune with the great God. By attunement to His will and at-one-ment with Him they become muktas even while living on this earth. No wonder therefore that the Alvars never made much of ascending to Heaven, as they made this world itself the highest Heaven by co-ordinating their karanas in enjoyment of Him. And Desika, true follower of the Alvar's cult as he is, boldly swore that He had no desire, speaking for himself, to go to Vaikunta. 'Satyam sape Vaaranasailanaatha! Vaikuntavaasepi na me abhilashah'. That is in Varadaraja Panchasat. He is going to wind up this Stotra by praying to Daya Devi to confer on him mokshananda here itself. That is in the hundredth sloka of this stotra.

सारं लब्ध्वा कमपि महतः श्रीनिवासाम्बुराशेः
काले काले घनरसवती कालिकेवानुकम्पे ।
व्यक्तोन्मेषा मृगपतिगिरौ विश्वमाप्याययन्ती
शीलोपज्ञं क्षरति भवती शीतलं सद्गुणौघम्॥ (४५)

Saaram labdhvaa kamapi mahatah Sreenivasaamburaseh
kaale kaale ghanarasavatee kaalikeva Anukampe ।
Vyaktonmeshaa Mrigapatigirau visvam aapyaayantee
seelopagnam ksharati bhavaatee seetalam sadgunaugham ॥ (45).

Devi Anukampa! Having extracted the excellent essence from the big ocean-like Srinivasa, you shine like an array of clouds on the top of Simhachala (another name for Tirumala) and with the idea of gladdening the entire Universe you shower at proper times torrential rains in the shape of cool and beneficent qualities like sauseelya.

Having postulated the svaroopa, roopa, guna etc., of the Highest which is at once the Absolute of Philosophy and the God of Religion, Desika proceeds to show how amongst those high and sublime aspects Daya or Mercy is really of the essence of that Being. In one sense, the glory, grandeur and sublimity of the Lord induces in His devotees a sense of frustration caused by the thought of their own lowliness as contrasted with His greatness. Very frequently one is apt to exclaim அவன் எவ்விடத்தான் நான் யார் (Who is He and what am I?) My smallness is in direct proportion to His greatness. How can I ever hope to reach Him? This heart-rending wail has risen from many a devout heart. But the ever-kind Lord does not allow His devotees to be seized by this sort of panic. He cleverly conceals from them His paratva or transcendent glory and attracts them by His sauseelya, saulabhya, vatsalya and similar qualities. This becomes possible for the Lord only because He is a Dayaavaan a compassionate and merciful Person. Desika very artistically describes in this sloka how Daya is the quintessence of Bhagavat-svarupa, and how Daya enables us to enjoy the qualities like sauseelya that make for the redemption of human souls.

The sloka starts with the word "saaram" meaning essence. Lord Srinivasa is like the vast and expansive sea, deep and fearful. Like the clouds that plunge into that sea, extract fresh water therefrom, rise aloft into space and hang about the crests of mountains, Dayadevi, who is here likened to such a cloud, extracts the essence of Srinivasa, rises up into space and stations herself in Simhachala. *Mrigapati* means the king of animals and therefore refers to a lion. Simhachala is one of the names of the sacred Tirumala Hill.

Kaalika is a multitude of rain-laden clouds, and gets that name because of the dark colour. The analogy is intended to suggest that while the water in the sea, however plenty, is unfit for use and consumption, the waters that come from the clouds which drank of that very sea are veritably life-giving. In the upameya the suggestion is that Daya extracts the best essence of the Parabrahmasvaroopa and showers the same on us. This essence or *saaram* is referred to as *kamapi saaram*, a great and wonderful essence. If the ocean of Srinivasa is immense, the essence derived therefrom by Daya is *kamapi*—indescribably great.

That only clouds containing water in large quantities will be dark is shown by the words "ghanarasavatee" and "kaalikaa." This cloud of Daya rains and pours in plenty only at the proper seasons,—kaale kaale,—and thereby pleases the cosmos,—visvam aapyaayantee.

What is it that Daya rains upon men and women of the land? The clouds pour cool water by raining. Dayadevi rains Srinivasa's cool and auspicious qualities in shoals. Before Daya blesses us with all those great and auspicious qualities of the Lord, she first manifests herself to us, even like the dark cloud that gladdens by gathering aloft in the sky promising a down pour of rain.

Dayadevi has been likened before to the tree, to a boat and so on. Here she is likened to a cloud. As the stotra proceeds we shall see her being likened to several other objects such as the Ganges, the Yamuna, and the Sarasvati and so on. The expression "ksharati sadgunaugham" (pours good qualities) once again emphasises the supremacy of Daya among the gunaas of the Lord. One may safely assert that this is the central theme of Dayasataka.

भीमे नित्यं भवजलनिधौ मज्जतां मानवाना-
मालम्बार्थं वृषगिरिपतिस्त्वन्निदेशात्प्रयुङ्क्ते ।
प्रज्ञासारं प्रकृतिमहता मूलभागेन जुष्टं
शाखाभेदैः सुभगमनघं शाश्वतं शास्त्रपाणिम् ॥ (४६)

Bheeme nityam bhavajalanidhau majjataam maanavaanaam
  Aalambaartham Vrishagiripathihi tvannidesaat prayunkte ।
Pragnaasaaram prakritimahataa moolabhaagena jushtam
  saakhaabhedaihi subhagam anagham saasvatam sasstrapaanim ॥(46)

For rescuing human beings who are ever sinking in the fearful ocean of samsara, Lord Srinivasa, at your behest, extends the faultless and eternal helping-hand of Saastra, whose essence is wisdom, which is by nature great, which is associated with the pranava, and which is lovely on account of the several branches (scriptures). (Note the absence of any address as Daye, Karune etc.)

After having described the nature of '*sreyes*.' the highest bliss which is Parabrahman in the form of Srinivasa, Vedanta Desika goes on to deal with the other part of the theme *viz.*, *taddhetudaata* in the second half of this decad which begins with this sloka.

Like the trained elephant which affords all aid for the mahout to get upon it, the Lord furnishes to us the means to attain Him. The first of such help is *Saastrapradaana* or the promulgation of the *Saastras*. Readers will remember how in sloka 18 *ante* it was pointed out that Saastras are given to us like lamps to dispel the darkness of our ignorance. In this sloka the poet adverts to the same topic to indicate the inner purpose of the Saastras. *Saamaanya Saastras* were the Subject of that sloka, whereas here the Visesha Saastras are indicated.

The purpose of creation is to afford us an opportunity for redeeming ourselves from samsara; it is here pointed out how the saastras help in that process of redemption. They act like the hand proffered to lift a man sinking in water. Here the *upama* is worked into fine details as is usual with the poet. Mortals sinking in the vast and terrific ocean of samsaara are referred to as being helped out of it by the proffered hand of the Lord which is Saastra or Veda. The hand is beautiful, long, stout at the root (shoulders) and having charming branches in the shape of fingers. In addition, the hand is accustomed to help and so does not possess the fault of unhelpfulness. It is also eternal. Applying those same words to the Saastras which are the upameya in the Upama, the Saastras are said to be pragnaasaaram—having wisdom as their essence. They are *moolabhaagena Jushtam*—connected with Pranava, which in turn is (prakriti-mahataa). great and glorious by its root-letter

Just as the hand is beautiful because of its fingers, the Saastras are charming because of their several *saakhaas* or branches (traditional recensions). Saastraas are also *anagha* (faultless) and *saasvata* (eternal).

Who is it that proffers this helping hand of the Saastraas to beings sinking in samsaara? It is Vrishagiripati, Lord Srinivasa. And He does so impelled by Daya, as shown by the words *tvannidesaat* (by your command). Dayadevi directs the Lord to go to the help of suffering humanity and He does so by extending His hand to lift them up, thereby furnishing to them *aalambam* or support. A *karaavalamba* is thus the subject-matter of this sloka.

Incidentally it may be noticed that this sloka does not contain any word referring to Daya by name. This sloka has to be taken with the next one for reasons which we shall set out there.

विद्वत्सेवाकतकनिकषैर्वीतपङ्काशयानां
पद्माकान्तः प्रणयति दये दर्पणं ते स्वशास्त्रम् ।
लीलादक्षां त्वदनवसरे लालयन्विप्रलीप्सां
मायाशास्त्राण्यपि शमयितुं त्वत्प्रपन्नप्रतीपान् ॥ (४७)

Vidvat-sevaa-katakanikaḥsaihi veetapankaasayaanaam
Padmaakaantaha pranayati Daye! darpanam te Svasaastram ।
Leeladakshaam tvadanavasare laalayan vipralipsaam
Maayaasaastraanyapi samayitum tvatprapannaprateepaan ॥ (47)

Daya Devi! Lord Srinivasa, the Consort of Padma, promulgates two kinds of saastraas. One of them which He promulgates (in assoication with you) serves as a mirror to you and acts for the benefit of the pure-minded persons who have eschewed sinful thoughts by constant and intimate contact with the truly learned. It is His own Saastra (Sva-saastra). In your absence, however, fondling the desire to deceive induced by His sportive instinct, He produces MOHA-SAASTRAS for putting down the foes of your votaries.

After dealing with Saastra-pradaana generally in the previous sloka, in the present sloka the poet refers to the Pancharatra saastra and the mohasaastras both of which have been promulgated by the Lord, and points out the difference between them. Desika has established the validity and supremacy of the Pancharaatra-saastra also known as Bhagavat-saastra, following his illustrious predecessor Ramanuja, who established its authoritativeness in the Sri Bhashya. Desika has written a treatise called *Pancharatraraksha.* In the opening sloka of Yatiraja Saptati he refers to the Lord as " Vaktaa pancharaatrasya yas-svayam " (वक्ता पंचरात्रस्य यः स्व· म). The words *Svasastram* in this sloka must therefore be taken as referring to this paancharatra Saastra. Not only is it His own Saastra, but it reflects the glory and grandeur of Dayadevi and therefore is like a mirror (darpana) to her. This Saastra is devoted exclusively to the glory of Lord Srinivasa and it is stated here by Desika that it has been promulgated solely for the benefit of the pure-minded persons in whose hearts there is no place for sin. They are described as veetapankaasayaaha वीतपङ्काशयाः (Persons with minds cleansed of sin). Panka is mud and is indicative of sin and ignorance. How that mud is removed is explained by the phrase ' vidvatsevaakatakanikashaihi.' Kataka is the clearing-nut which is used for making water clear. It is known as தேத்தாங்கொட்டை in Tamil. The *kataka* that effects the removal of mud and dirt in the hearts of men is referred to as ' *vidvatsevaa* ' here. It means the worship of vidvans (the learned men) who have acquired true knowledge. ' nikasha ' means a whetstone. Kataka-nikashaihi means by whetting or rubbing of the clearing nut. Desika points out that the surest way of dispelling ignorance from one's mind is to closely associate with, and follow in the footsteps of, the truly learned men.

Darpanam te—By referring to this Saastra as Dayadevi's darpana (mirror), Desika emphasises the fact that it is only this saastra that fully reflects Daya Devi. The Saastras referred to in the previous sloka are also Daya-karya or the work of Daya. But Daya is seen to fulfil herself only in the Pancharatra Saastra. Referring to Ramanuja's great works, Desika sings in his Yatiraja Saptati " Lakshmeekanta-sphatika-mukuro Lakshmanaaryopadesaha " लक्ष्मीकान्तस्फटिकमुकुरो लक्ष्मणार्योपदेशः *Mukura* is mirror and Ramanuja's works are said to be the mirror reflecting truly the glory of Lakshmikanta (Srinivasa). It is only when Srinivasa looks into that mirror that He can see Himself as He is. The idea evidently is that His face and form get distorted out of recognition in other Siddhantas. Similarly the greatness of Daya devi is fully seen only in the Paancharatra Saastra.

There is another set of sastras that the Lord has promulgated as Kapila, Buddha and so on, postulating untrue doctrines opposed to the spirit of the Vedas. They are referred to here as Maya or Mohasaastras (false or deceiving saastras). How the Lord comes to be the promulgator of those saastras also is mentioned in the latter half of the sloka. The Lord, it is stated, has two wives or Consorts. (Mithah-Kalaha-Kalpanaa-Vishamavrithi-Leela-Daya-Parigrahana - Sankalpa Suryodaya I–67). One is Daya and the others is Leela. Daya is grace and Leela is sport. Behind Daya's back and in the presence of Leela the Lord gives Himself up to *Vipralipsa* or desire to deceive. In that mood He promulgates the Maya saastras. This is the gist of the second half of the sloka. But even here the Lord's protecting instinct is perceived. For, the Mohasaastras, only result in putting down the foes of Daya's votaries, by enticing those foes away from the field of activity of the followers of Daya. That way, the devotees of the Lord are left alone to pursue the path of saranaagati in peace, and attain the highest bliss.

'Api samayitum'—'Api damayitum' is a different reading. The meaning is the same.

दैवात्प्राप्ते वृषगिरितटं देहिनि त्वन्निदानात्
स्वामिन् पाहीत्यवशवचने विन्दति स्वापमन्त्यम् ।
देवः श्रीमान्दिशति करुणे दृष्टिमिच्छंस्त्वदीया-
मुद्घातेन श्रुतिपरिषदामुत्तरेणाभिमुख्यम् ॥ (४८)

Daivaat praapte Vrishagiritutam dehini tvan-nidaanaat
'Svamin! Paahi' ityavasavachane vindati svaapam antyam ।
Devas-Sreemaan disati Karune! drishtim ichhan tvadeeyaam
Udghaatena srutiparishadaam uttarena aabhimukhyam ॥ (48).

Devi Karuna! When a human being, as a result of casual good deeds done by him by your help, reaches the slope of the Tirumala Hill (by your help) happens to breathe his last, uttering (by your help) while in a state of mental stupor, the words 'O Lord protect me,'—the great God, who is Sriman, anxious to secure your (approving) glances, confers his favourable-ness (or presence) uttering, by way of reply the word (Om) which occurs at the commencement of all the Vedas.

The sentiment given expression to in Sloka 27 above is again dealt with here but in a different manner. It was stated there that those who have taken residence on the sacred Hill obtain the grace of Daya by the very fact of their residence there, and that when they are *in extremis* Daya gently reminds the Lord about them. Here reference is made to a casual visitor who reaches the slopes of the Hill by a stroke of good luck caused by Dayadevi, ever-watchful of human interests, and happens to die there. Daya makes him utter the words ‘svaamin, paahi.’ (My Lord! protect). The words are not uttered willingly or even consciously. It is an ‘avasavachana’—a word uttered in spite of himself. To such a man who dies with those words on his lips, the Lord extends His favour.

‘Aabhimukhyam’ denotes presence as also a favourable attitude. The Lord who confers that aabhimukhya is referred to by two expressions ‘devaha’ and ‘Srimaan.’ Devaha means a shining God. He is a Sriman—eternally associated with Sri. It is as Sriman He confers *aabhimukhyam* upon His votaries.

Why does He do so? “Tvadeeyaam drishtim ichchhan,”—anxious to secure your (approving) looks. The desire on the part of Srinivasa to fulfil Daya’s desires, do her behests, obey her commands, has been referred to in several places in this stotra and is re-stated here in a nice way. The whole world is anxious to secure the Lord’s glances. The greatest men have been shown to long for some sort of life on the Tirumala Hill in order to be the recipient of a single kataaksha from those lovely and loving eyes (sloka 42). That Lord, in turn, is anxious to secure the loving glances of His consort Dayadevi. He likes it. He takes a pleasure in it. This is indicated by the use of the word ‘devaha’—the sportful person. At the same time He is also Sriman. That is to say, Lakshmi also likes the Lord to render such help to human beings and become the recipient of Daya’s approval as indicated by her looks.

In the Saranaagati Deepika, Desika prays to the Lord to make him a fit receptacle for the Lord’s bounty and the Lord is requested thereby to qualify Himself for being the object of Lakshmi’s loving glances.

How the Lord gives expression to His aabhimukhyam is set out in the last *paada*. He promises succour to the dying man who has called for His protection, by saying ‘Yes.’ The sacred word ‘ௐ’ OM also means ‘Yes,’ and expresses assent. ௐ OM is also the pranava. Here Desika indulges in a very round about expression to indicate Om. Instead of referring to that single letter as such, he has said that the Lord confers aabhimukhyam by replying with the word "which constitutes the beginning of the Vedas." That word undoubtedly is pranava. There must be a purpose with which Desika refers to Om in this manner. The Lord's assent to the dying man's desire for protection is backed up by all the Vedas. If His ॐ (yes) turns out to be false, it tantamounts to all the Vedas becoming false and useless. उद्घात is beginning. Sruti-parishad is the synod of the Vedas.

The purport of this sloka is that Dayadevi brings about a situation where the Lord Himself with His consort is ready to assure human beings of His protection. This is a step much in advance of the Saastrapradana, promulgation of the saastra, referred to in the previous two slokas.

श्रेयःसूतिं सकृदपि दये संमतां यः सखीं ते
शीतोदारामलभत जनः श्रीनिवासस्य दृष्टिम् ।
देवादीनामयमनृणतां देहवत्त्वेऽपि विन्दन्
बन्धान्मुक्तो बलिभिरनघैः पूर्यते तत्प्रयुक्तैः ॥ (४९)

Sreyassootim sakrt api Daye! sammataam yas-sakheem te
seetodaaraam alabhata janas-Sreenivaasasya drishtim ।
Devaadeenaam ayam anrinataam dehavtvepi vindun
bandhaanmukto balibhir-anaghaihi pooryate tat prayuktaihi ॥ (49).

Dayadevi! That being who obtains at least once the kataaksha of Srinivasa, which yields (causes) beatitude, which is cool and bounteous, and which is your PRIYA-SAKHI (very dear friend), gets relieved of all debts which he owed to the devas and others, even while connected with the body; and on his release from bondage (samsara) he is worshipped by those very devas and others who load him with offerings in the shape of faultless oblations.

The opening word of this sloka 'sreyas-sootim' indicates the topic dealt with in this decad. The central idea of this sloka is that the Lord's benign kataksha is the cause of one's attaining sreyas (beatitude). That kataksha is *seeta* (cool) and therefore calculated to banish all *taapa* (heat). It is *udaara* (generous) and it is Daya's *sammataa sakhee* (chosen friend and companion). The intimacy between the Lord's kataaksha and Daya is once again emphasised. (See commentary on sloka 42).

The recipient of that kataaksha gets released from the threefold debts with which everyone is said to be born, *viz*., debts due to the sages, the gods, and the manes of the ancestors. This state of relief from indebtedness is attained by him even when his connection with the body continues. When that connection ceases the position gets reversed. The very devas etc., who were propitaited by that being begin to propitiate him during his ascent to heaven. *bandhaat muktaha*—released from all bondage. *balibhihi*—by those oblations proffered by the devas etc. The word '*anaghaihi*' meaning blemishless used in connection with *balibhihi* (oblations) is intended to emphasise the fact that the offering is spontaneous and voluntary and not in expectation of repayment in one form or another. Pooryate—is filled with. Being the recipient of the Lord's divyakataaksha is thus shown to make all the difference in the status of a man. His indebtedness is wiped out; he becomes free from all liability. Not only that, but the very persons whom he served before begin to serve him.

In sloka 20 above, jaayamaana kataksha was referred to. That is the kataaksha received by a being at the time of his birth. It was pointed out there that he develops a desire for moksha which is fulfilled without much effort on his part. Pursuing the same topic here the poet points out a very important stage in the progress of that soul blessed with jaayamaana kataaksha. The next sloka develops this idea.

दिव्यापाङ्गं दिशसि करुणे येषु सद्देशिकात्मा
  क्षिप्रं प्राप्ता वृषगिरिपतिं क्षत्रबन्ध्वादयस्ते ।
विश्वाचार्या विधिशिवमुखाः स्वाधिकारोपरुद्धाः
  मन्ये माता जड इव सुते वत्सला मादृशे त्वम् ॥ (५०)

Divyaapaangam disasi Karune! yeshu saddesikaatma
  kshipram praaptaa Vrishagiripatim Kshatrabandhvadayaste ।
Viswaacharyaavidhisivamukhaas-svaadhikaaroparuddhaha
  manye maataa jada iva sute vatsalaa maadrise tvam ॥ (50)

Devi Karuna! Those,—Kshatrabandhu and others,—on whom you, in the form of a good Acharya, bestow divine glances, attain Lord Srinivasa very quickly, while Brahma, Siva and other world-teachers are bound down by their office (position). I therefore think that, like a mother towards her dull-witted son, you are specially affectionate towards people like me.

In sloka 48, Daya's *drishti* (glance) was referred to. In sloka 49 Lord Srinivasa's *drishti* was mentioned. In this sloka Divya-apaanga (divine glance) has been very deftly used in such a way as to be capable of being interpreted as Lord's apaanga or as Daya's apaanga, though both really are one. This kataaksha—be it the Lord's or Daya's—is bestowed by Dayadevi who assumes the form of a *Sut Desika*, a good and pure Acharya, and bestows on us her beneficient glances (or secures to us the Lord's kataaksha). It has been said that the Lord's good will is one of the causes that secure to us Acharya-praapti (contact with an Acharya). Acharya-praapti is a *sine qua* non for obtaining moksha. There is a famous Purana sloka which says that sinners like Kshatrabandhu, as well as meritorious men like Pundarika, obtained moksha only by having an acharya.

"पापिष्ठः क्षत्रबंधुश्च पुण्डरीकश्च पुण्यकृत् ।
आचार्यवत्तया मुक्तौ तस्मादाचार्यवान् भवेत्" ॥

So Acharya-praapti is a hetu (cause) for sreyas (bliss). This is the last of the causes that contribute to one's attainment of bliss referred to in this decad.

In the next decad Desika is going to deal with saranaagati (surrender). As a prelude to it, one of the very essential concomitants thereof, *viz.*, Acharya Sambandha is spoken about here. As the Purana sloka quoted above says, every one has to become an 'Aacharyavaan'—possessed of an Acharya, before attaining moksha. The Upanishad mantra also is to the same effect—Acharyavaan purusho veda आचार्यवान् पुरुषो वेद (Only that man who has an Acharya knows). The importance of the sentiment contained in this sloka cannot be overestimated.

Whatever the Lord does for the benefit of humanity is attributed to Daya as being her work.

साक्षात् नारायणो देवः कृत्वा मर्त्यमयीं तनुम् ।
मग्नान् उद्धरते लोकान् कारुण्यात् शास्त्रपाणिना ॥

(Taking the human form (of an Acharya) the Lord out of mercy rescues sinking humanity by proffering the hand of saastra). This deals with the Lord's assumption of Acharya-roopa or form. The word 'Kaarunyaat' in this sloka indicates that this is an act of

Daya. And that is why Daya is here said to have taken the form of an Acharya (Desikaatmaa).

Those who are the recipients of the 'Divyaapaanga' attain Lord Srinivasa quickly (kshipram). The reference to Kshatrabandhu shows that the poet is thinking of the sloka extracted above and is drawing our attention to the importance of Acharya-sambandha, by which even great sinners are capable of attaining beatitude. (Kshatrabandhu was a great sinner, but had the good fortune to come into contact with a sage who took pity on him and became his Acharya, weaned him from his sinfulness, and ultimately secured for him everlasting bliss).

This benefit which Daya secures to us is sought to be contrasted with the plight of great beings like Brahma, Siva and so on, who as a result of their meritorious actions (satkarma) hold high posts and act as world-acharyas, jagatgurus. They are tied down to their posts and do not get release. They are themselves holding acharya-posts. The poet appears to suggest here that while acharyas continue in bondage, those who rely on acharyas get released.

Thinking of this difference, Desika exultingly thinks of the measure of protection extended to us and says that Daya Devi like all mothers is more concerned with the welfare and well-being of deficient and mentally incapacitated children than with those of the clever and capable. A mother is fond of all her children, but when one of them is unable to take care of itself, her concern for that child makes her ever think of it and help it in all ways to be safe and happy. So too Daya Devi the mother of all chetanas, is more concerned with the welfare of persons like us unable to take care of ourselves and who are helpless in the extreme. This helplessness or kaarpanya is what earns for us speedy release, and the next decad with Saranaagati as its topic starts with the words 'atikripana' meaning exceedingly wretched and helpless.

श्रीमते निगमान्तमहादेशिकाय नमः

श्री श्रीनिवास परब्रह्मणे नमः

॥ दयाशतकम् ॥

DAYAA SATAKAM

SIXTH DECAD.

THIS decad is the centre of this stotra. There are five decads preceding it and four full decads and eight extra slokas following it. It undoubtedly enshrines the central theme of the Daya Sataka *viz.*, Saranaagati. This doctrine, one may say without fear of contradiction, is Vedanta Desika's gift to world-thought. Earlier Acharyas had *adopted* Saranaagati as a direct means for the attainment of Mukti. But they had all left it to Desika to scientifically systematise it and propound it to the world as a *sakshat-mokshopaaya*, a direct means for moksha. From Svetasvatara Upanishad which said " Mumukshur vai saranam aham prapadye," through Nammalwar who said புகலொன்றில்லா அடியேன் உன்னடிக்கீழ் அமர்ந்து புகுந்தேனே, to Ramanuja who gave to us the Saranagati Gadyam, it was all *anushtaana* or practice. It was Desika who first synthesised the several relevant texts and laid down in and by his numerous works that Prapatti or Saranagati is an independent and self-sufficient upaya or means. For that reason he is known as प्रपदनकलाजन्मजलधिः 'Prapadana-kalaa-janma-jaladhihi' and தஞ்சப்பரகதியைத் தந்தருள்வான் That doctrine is the topic of this decad. Prapadana-sulabhatva (प्रपदन सुलभत्व) of the Lord is the subject of the sixth *pattu* பத்து of Tiruvoimozhi.

The metre employed for this decad is 'Nardataka.' There are seventeen syllables to a paada in this also. Suka-brahmam adopted this metre while singing the *Sruti Geeta*.

अतिक्रमणोऽपि जन्तुरधिगम्य दये भवती-
मशिथिलधर्मसेतुपदवीं रुचिरामचिरात् ।
अमितमहोर्मिजालमतिलङ्घ्य भवाम्बुनिधिं
भवति वृषाचलेशपदपत्तननित्यधनी ॥ (५१)

Atikripanopi janturadhigamya Daye! bhavateem
asithiladharmasetu padaveem ruchiraam achiraat ।
Amitamahormijaalam atilanghya bhavambunidhim
bhavati Vrishachalesapadapattananityadhanee ॥ (51)

Dayadevi! Even the most wretched and helpless being, by resorting to you who are like a beautiful; and at the same time strong and righteous; bridge-way, quickly crosses the ocean of samsara full of innumerable huge and mighty wave-groups, and attains eternal wealth in the city of Lord Srinivasa's Feet.

Note how the sloka begins with *atikripana* and ends with '*nityadhanee*.' This change from dire distress to undiminishing wealth is what Daya alone can bring about.

Asithila is unbreakable, unslackening. *Asithila dharma* is Saranagati dharma, as defined by Valmiki through Sitadevi in the words " Viditassahi Dharmagnyaha Saranaagata Vatsalaha " विदितस्सहि धर्मज्ञः शरणागतवत्सलः equating dharma with saranaagata-vaatsalya. *Setu* is bridge or dam across water. Here Daya is likened to a bridge across the ocean of Samsara and even a very insignificant man can use the bridge and the pathway (padavee) provided by it to cross over. The '*amita*' (countless) and '*maha*' (big and mighty) '*oormijaala*' (wave-groups) tossing in the ocean do not affect him in any manner, as he uses a safe bridge far above the waves to cross over. The words 'amitamahormijaalam' reminds us of 'madanapavanoddhootamahormimala' of King Kulasekhara in the Mukundamaala.

Once he goes to the other side, what is it he sees? The great and glorious lotus-feet of Lord Srinivasa which shine like a spacious and glorious city—*padapattana*. *Pada* is foot and *pattana* is city. Vedanta Desika who is known for his outstanding vairagya, as much as for his great gnana, shunned towns and cities. But there are two towns to reach which, and reside in which, he had great longing. One is Vrishaachalesa-padapattana; and the other is yati-chakravarti-pada-padma-pattana. The extra word 'padma' used in the case of Sri Bhashyakara speaks for itself. Desika's Srinivasa Bhakti is excelled only by Desika's Ramanuja-bhakti.

Nityadhanee—eternally rich man. No more the vicissitude of fortune making a person a millionaire today and a pauper tomorrow,—but ever safe and secure at the feet of the Lord (Srinivasa The man who has reached that place through saranaagati is there after rich for ever and ever. By his good fortune which made him resort to Daya as his saviour, he becomes the possessor of a vast and undiminishing fortune.

ruchira meaning lovely and charming indicates the attractiveness of saranaagati-marga as contrasted with the other paths which are difficult and troublesome. The words *adhigamya* and *atilanghya* are very significant. Reaching Daya means and involves crossing the samsaric ocean.

achiraat—in no time. It is another very significant expression. Because it is only a prapanna that quickly attains mukti, whereas all the other upaasakaas following the karmayoga gnanayoga and bhaktiyoga paths have to abide their time.

अभिमुखभावसंपदभिसंभविनां भविनां
क्वचिदुपलक्षिता क्वचिदभङ्गुरगूढगतिः ।
विमलरसावहा वृषगिरीशदये भवती
सपदि सरस्वतीव शमयत्यघमप्रतिघम् ॥ (५२)

Abhimukhabhaavasampadabhisambhavinaam bhavinaam
kvachidupalakshitaa kvachid abhanguragoodhagatihi ।
Vimalarasaavaha Vrishagireesadaye! bhavatee
sapadi Sarasvateeva samayati agham apratigham.॥ (52)

O Daya of Vrishagirinatha! Like the Sarasvati river, with its course visible in some places, and invisible—yet unbroken—in other places, and with pure rasa (water) you quickly destroy by your flow the irremovable sins of those wallowing in samsara, who possess that rare wealth of being favourbly inclined towards you.

The previous sloka ended with a reference to dhana, riches. This sloka starts with a sampath or wealth. It is *abhimukha-bhaavasampath*, the wealth of *aubhimukya* towards Daya. Though Daya is there ever ready to come to the rescue of the weak and the helpless, people do not easily take to her. Some, however, have the good fortune to adopt an attitude of aabhimukhya, a favourable and favour-soliciting disposition towards Daya. That is referred to here as a sampath or wealth.

The sloka is couched in the form of a slesha for Daya and the river Saraswati. Saraswati is one of the three rivers that contribute to the Triveni or confluence of three rivers. But unlike the other two—the Ganga and the Yamuna—it is not visible at the place of sangama or union. It is *antarvahini*, flowing underground. The river is therefore referred to here as having a visible flow in places and an invisible underground current in other places. Even where the current is *goodha* (hidden), it is *abhangura* (unimpeded). It bears pure and pellucid water—vimalarasaavahaa. Rasa is water. And it has the power of banishing unpardonable sins of those mortals who think of it fervently. It destroys sins by mere *aabhimukhya* or fervent and faithful attitude towards its purifying powers even without a bath in its waters.

So too Daya. Her flow is also visible to some and on some occasions, and invisible and hidden to others and on other occasions; but ever and anon she flows unimpeded and without obstacles. She invariably bears *vimalarasa*, pure and faultless affection and friendship towards her votaries. And in respect of those who put themselves in an attitude of fervour and faith in regard to her she wipes out their sins which are otherwise *apratigha* (unassailable)

For 'bhavatee' there is another reading 'vahasi' meaning you flow.

'Sapadi' means quickly, at once. The moment one looks up to Daya for protection, immediately she rushes to his rescue and quells his sins and defections which are obstacles to his progress. Note the word 'achiraat' in the previous sloka.

Sriman V. V. Srinivasa Iyengar who was a literary artist of a very high order, in addition to being a great Desika-bhakta, very beautifully suggested that the *Sarasvatee* referred to in this sloka will take in not only the river Sarasvati, but also Yateesvara-sarasvatee, or the utterances of the great Yatiraja, Ramanuja. This idea has thrilled several scholars and pandits deeply learned in the Sri Bhashya. Every epithet in this sloka fits in with that great and immortal work as it does with the river and with Daya.

अपि करुणे जनस्य तरुणेन्दुविभूषणता-
मपि कमलासनत्वमपि धाम वृषाद्रिपतेः ।
तरतमतावशेन तनुते ननु ते विततिः
परहितवर्त्मणा परिपचेलिमकेलिमती ॥ (५३)

Api Karune! janasya Tarunenduvibhooshanataam
api Kamalasanatvam api dhaama Vrishaadripatehe ।
Taratamataavasena tanute nanu te vitatihi
parahitavarshmana paripachelimakelimatee. ॥ (53)

Karunadevi! By spreading yourself out sportfully with the sole purpose of bringing about the welfare of others, you confer upon people either the status of Paramasiva adorned with the young moon, or the position of being a Kamalaasana (Brahma) or Paramapada of Lord Srinivasa according to the well-marked difference noticeable in them.

This sloka deals with sarva-phala-pradatva (the capacity to bestow all desired fruits) of Daya to those who resort to her for the realisations of their desires. Contrasting the sentiment contained in this sloka with that in slokas 41 and 42 above, one must be surprised at Desika dealing with the aspect emphasised in this sloka, *viz.*, that Dayadevi helps one to attain Brahmapada or Rudrapada. But Desika has to postulate the efficacy of saranagati as a means to all desired ends for persons who are not qualified to obtain the same by normal means. One of the most important pramaanas (authority) in favour of saranagati as a potent upaya is the charama sloka of the Bhagavad Gita. It is from that sloka among others that Desika derives authority for the efficacy of Saranagati. Desika has summed up the meaning of that sloka in the following *kaarika* which occurs in Srimad Rahasyatrayasara:

सुदुष्करेण शोचेद्यः येन येनेष्टहेतुना ।
स सः तस्याहमेवेति चरमश्लोकः सङ्ग्रहः ॥

From this it is clear that with whatever end in view one resorts to Prapatti or saranagati due to one's inability to secure the same by the prescribed means, the Lord fulfils his desire by substituting Himself as the Siddhopaya in the place of the prescribed means. Thus saranagati is a means not only for mukti but for all proper ends. If therefore a person fixes his mind upon the greatness of Mahadeva and desires to attain that position, Dayadevi helps him to realise that desire. Her very form (varshma) is 'parahita.' (Vide sloka 26 above). So too in regard to the position of Chaturmukha Brahma or Sri Vaikuntha of Lord Srinivasa. The spread of Daya knows no limitations. The word *Vitati* meaning spread reminds us of the likening of Daya to the river Saraswati and to similar comparisons with the other rivers to follow. The word 'keli' means sport or pastime. Daya's sport lies in conferring hita on others, (parahita). That the hita or good varies from person to person; and from stage to stage in the same person; is indicated by the use of the word 'taratamataavasena,'—according to difference.

It must be noted how Desika refers to Siva and Brahma. Siva is described as 'Tarunenduvibhushana' (a lovable person adorned by the crescent moon). So too Brahma is referred to as 'kamaalaasana' (the one with the lotus-seat). Not only is there a total absence of any want of respect towards those high personages, but they are also described in attractive and sweet language.

धृतभुवना दये त्रिविधगत्यनुकूलतरा
वृषगिरिनाथपादपरिरम्भवती भवती ।
अविदितवैभवापि सुरसिन्धुरिवातनुते
सकृदवगाहमानमपतापमपापमपि ॥ (५४)

Dhritabhuvanaa Daye! trividhagatyanukoolataraa
Vrishagirinaathapaadaparirambhavatee bhavatee ।
Adviditavaibhavaapi Surasindhurivaatanute
sakrit avagaahamaanam apataapam apaapam api. ॥ (54)

Dayadevi! Like the Sura-sindhu, divine river, you support (protect) the whole world; you have also a threefold flow; you also embrace the feet of Vrishagirinatha; even if your greatness is not understood you make a person who immerses (takes refuge) in you relieved from heat and sin.

Having likened Daya to the river Sarasvati in the previous sloka but one, the poet proceeds to compare Daya with Ganga and also the Yamuna, This sloka and the next have been interpreted by every commentator as referring to the Ganga only. Without any disrespect to those commentators I shall take leave to point out that either this or the next must refer to the Yamuna. It is not Desika's genius to refer to only some of a group. The Ganga, the Yamuna and the Sarasvati are a well-known trio. Further it is very rarely, if ever, that Desika repeats the same sentiment in the same manner in successive slokas. Scrutinising the words employed in this and the next sloka from this view point, I have come to the conclusion that in this sloka Yamuna is referred to and not Ganga. But before that I shall give the meaning of the words as referring to the Ganga. The three attributes common to Daya and the Ganga are: 1. Dritabhuvanaa (धृतभुवना) 2. Trividhagatyanukoolataraa (त्रिविधगत्यनुकूलतरा) and 3. Vrishagirinaathapaadaparirambhavatee (वृषगिरिनाथपादपरिरंभवती) Dhritabhuvanaa when applied to the Ganga means carrying water. (Bhuvana means water). Applied to Daya it means protecting the world (bhuvana meaning the world). Trividhagatyanukoolataraa means favourable for the threefold flow—meaning flowing in three regions—the sky, the earth and the paatala. In regard to Daya it means helpful in regard to the three fold pursuits—aisvarya, kaivalya and moksha. Daya helps an aisvaryakama (a seeker after wealth), a kaivalyarthi (he who runs after kaivalya or the enjoyment of the individual soul alone as distinguished from the paramatma), and the Moksharthi (seeker after bliss). This is another form of Daya's sarvaphalapradatva (capacity to confer all desired fruits).

The Ganga flows from the feet of the Lord and is referred to here as embracing it. Dayadevi similarly takes her origin from Lord Srinivasa's paada. (vide Rooda-Vrishachalapateh-paade, sloka 18 above).

In the second half of this sloka it is pointed out that a person who takes a plunge into the fountain of Daya as much as a person who takes a dip in the Ganga, though he may not be aware of the greatness and glory of Daya or Ganga, gets rid of (heat) ताप and पाप (sin). That one plunge is sufficient is indicated by sakrit avagaaha.

A knowledge of the greatness of the Ganga in regard to its purifying effect is not necessary for the bather, for even without that, by bathing in the Ganga the person feels relieved from a sense of heat and gets cleansed of sins. So too in the case of Daya though we cannot fully understand her mahimaa (greatness) still if we take refuge in her, she makes us free from the taapatraya and free from all our sins. Fire will not fail to singe the hand that touches it because it is not known to be fire.

Let me now respectfully place before the reader the interpretation of the words which will make the sloka refer to Yamuna. Without the Yamuna the Triveni will not be complete. The threefold flow must be taken to mean the flow of the rivers needed to constitute a Triveni. The attribute 'paadaparirambhavatee' seems to be far more apt if it is taken with the Yamuna than with the Ganga. ‘Pariramba’ is embrace. The Ganga took its origin from the toe of the Lord, but it has nowhere been said that the waters of the Ganga embraced the Lord’s feet; whereas the Yamuna is well-known for having frequently embraced the feet of the Lord when He came down as Sri Krishna. When Sri Krishna was carried by His father Vasudeva from Muttra to Gokula, the waters of the Yamuna are said to have risen up and embraced the feet of the infant Krishna before permitting Vasudeva to cross it. On the numerous occasions on which Lord Krishna had jalakreeda in the Yamuna with the Gopis, her waters lovingly embraced the divine and lovely feet of Krishna. It was because of this Goda refers to the Yamuna as தூய பெருநீர் யமுனை. This attribute in this sloka seems to indicate, beyond doubt, that the Yamuna is in the poet’s contemplation. Nor is there anything against this interpretation in the third paada where the word ‘surasindhu’ occurs. Probably there is a suggestion (dhvani) here that the Yamuna is a river whose glory is not (as) well-known (as the Ganga’s) Surasindhu may well refer to any holy river not necessarily the Ganga. Desika has sung in one place of the Sarasvati having the Yamuna’s status (Krishnaanwayena dadhateem Yamunaanubhaavam……… Sarasvateem—Godastuti). कृष्णान्वयेन दधतीम् यमुनानुभावं तीर्थैः यथावद वगाह्य सरस्वतीम् ते । He is quite capable of singing of the Ganga also as Yamuna. I submit these considerations for what they are worth.

निगमसमाश्रिता निखिललोकसमृद्धिकरी
भजदघकूलमुद्रुजगतिः परितप्तहिता ।
प्रकटितहंसमत्स्यकमठाद्यवतारशता
विबुधसरिच्छ्रियं वृषगिरीशदये वहसि ॥ (५५)

Nigamasamaasritaa nikhilalokasamriddhikaree
bhajadaghakoolamudrujagatihi paritaptahitaa।
Prakatita hamsa matsya kamataadyavataarasataa
Vibudhasarichhriyam Vrishagireesa Daye! ahasi ॥ (55)

Daya of Vrishagireesa! You possess all the glory of the Ganga; for you are praised by the Vedas; you bring about copious and plentiful prosperity to all the worlds; your force destroys the sins (banks) of those who praise you; you are a source of comfort to those stricken by heat; and on you float the Lord’s forms of Hamsa (swans), Matsya (fish) and Kamata (tortoise).

Daya is compared to the Ganga in this sloka which is in the form of a slesha.

Nigamasamaasrithaa—The Ganga finds mention in the Vedas and Daya is dealt with in the Vedas.

The Ganga by fertilising tracts and irrigating millions of acres results in plentiful production and the world is thereby in possession of plenty. Daya also promises and procures plenty to her votaries in the world.

By strong and swift current the Ganga destroys shores and bunds that are calculated to curb its flow. So too in the case of persons whose spiritual progress and welfare are cribbed, cabined, and confined by their sins, Daya's flow shatters those bunds and barriers and sets them free.

In the Ganga there are several swans, fish, tortoises and hundreds of other such creatures. Daya is responsible for the Lord's assumption of the form of Hamsa (swan), Matsya (fish) and Koorma (tortoise), etc. Daya is responsible for these avataaras or incarnations of the Lord. (See sloka 35 above and sloka 82 post), and so she is spoken of here as publishing (prakatita) those forms which are numerous, *sata* (a hundred) being an upalakshana for numerous.

जगति मितं च त्वदितरा तु दये तरला
फलनियमोज्झिता भवति संतपनाय पुनः ।
त्वमिह निरङ्कुशप्रशकनादिविभूतिमती
वितरसि देहिनां निरवधिं वृषशैलनिधिं ॥ (५६)

Jagati mitamapchaa tvad itaraa tu Daye ! taralaa
Phalaniyamojjhitaa bhavati santapanaaya punaha ।
Tvamiha nirankusaprasakanaadivibhutimatee
vitarasi dehinaam niravadhim Vrishasailanidhim ॥ (56)

Dayadevi! In this world, other dayas (the mercy and grace of others except Lord Srinivasa) except you, are all niggardly and inconstant, without certainty of yielding fruit, and calculated to bring in pain and distress again. In this respect you alone have the support of untrammelled power (sakti) etc. and confer on men the boundless wealth of Vrishasaila, Lord Srinivasa.

Having compared the Daya of Srinivasa with the sacred rivers like the Ganga and the Sarasvati, the poet proceeds to contrast her with the Daya of others. Daya or compassion is possessed in some degree or other by every one. Even a man in distress may himself feel imbued with sympathy and compassion towards another being in greater distress; but that sort of daya helps no one. Compassion and sympathy must have strength and power at their back to be effective. This truth is brought home to us by this sloka.

The Daya, mercy or compassion, of every one except Lord Srinivasa, *i.e.*, all Dayas except the Daya in whose praise this stotra is sung (tvaditaraa)—are productive of small fruits (mithaphala). They are further taralaa (fickle, unsteady and transient). There is no certainty that they will yield even the benefits that are within their capacity. And their gifts to the extent they go are calculated to inflict pain again; for they are powerless to banish pain for ever.

In your case, however, no one can attribute any of these defects or shortcomings to you; for you have the glory of being backed up by nirankusa (unchecked and unrestrained) qualities such as sakti etc. (See sloka 10 above). The great gunas, gnana, sakti etc., are your vibhuti (wealth) and contribute to your splendour and magnificence. Hence your gifts are all lofty, permanent, certain of yielding fruit, and eschew all possibility of sorrow and pain ever recurring. Therefore you are able to confer on your votaries the great bliss which is that *nidhi* situate in Tirumala—Lord Srinivasa.

This sloka may be said to be an elaboration of Nammalwar's அவ்வருளல்லன அருளுமல்ல. The Daya of Lord Srinivasa is the only Daya—the other Dayas are really not Dayaas at all. Unless one obtains this *nischita buddhi*, definite knowledge, he is likely to waver, and his faith in the Lord's Daya will not be a strong and steadfast one. It is really this faith that impels Daya to take up the task of protecting us.

सकरुणलौकिकप्रभुपरिग्रहनिग्रहयोः
नियतिमुपाधिचक्रपरिवृत्तिपरम्परया ।
वृषभमहीधरेशकरुणे वितरङ्गयतां
श्रुतिमितसंपदि त्वयि कथं भविता विशयः ॥ (५७)

Sakarunalaukikaprabhuparigrahanigrahayoh
niyatim upaadhichakraparivrittiparamparayaa ।
Vrishabhamaheedharesa Karune! vitarangayataam
sruitmitasampadi tvayi katham bhavitaa visayaha ॥ (57)

Karuna of Vrishagireesa! Those who have carefully looked into the matter and noticed that the favours and frowns of the lords of this world are conditioned by (due to) the rotating causes in the nature of friendliness or hostility (towards them), they will not entertain any doubts about you whose greatness is measured (dealt with) by the Vedas.

Having dealt with the uniqueness of Daya, the poet now proceeds to show that no reasonable man can ever come to doubt her powers of protection. Do we not see about us that the great and rich men of this world (laukikaprabhus) imbued by sympathy and grace (sa-karuna) shower benefits on those of their followers who act in accordance with their wishes, expressed and unexpressed, and do we not also see those prabhus frown upon, renounce and punish those that act against their directions and inclinations? In other words, the favours and frowns of those lords of this world are the result of aanukoolya (favourableness, friendliness), and praatikoolya (hostility) respectively, in the persons rewarded or punished. With the change in the cause (upadhi) the result too varies. Aanukoolya or praatikoolya is said to come up alternating as in the whirling of a wheel (chakraparivritti)

By a proper study and analysis of, and reflection on, the ways of the worldly lords, we thus come to definitely understand the foregoing, *viz.*, that protection follows aanukoolya (favourableness) and punishment follows praatikoolya (hostility); of course the master (prabhu) must have karuna in his composition. He must be a sa-karuna; else he will never know what protection or reward is.

If that is the manner in which a lordly person with karuna acts, how can any one doubt the power of Karuna herself to protect those who bear aanukoolya and aabhimukhya towards her? Visayaha—(विशय :)—doubt, katham bhavitaa—(कथं भविता) how can it arise? Your fame and glory is dealt with by the Vedas. The laukika nyaya or worldly rule is sure to be more correctly applicable to the Vedic aspect borne by you. This question is really an answer to the doubt that some may entertain about Daya's willingness to come to our rescue. How can we expect Daya who never evinced any interest in us all these ages on ages suddenly come to our rescue?—so one may feel. The answer is furnished by this sloka. All these ages or years you never thought of the

Lord's Daya; you never looked up to her for help. So you were not protected. Now that you have learnt of her greatness and goodness and have appealed to her for help, she takes care of you and protects you.

That she has the capacity to protect us has been established by several previous slokas including the last one. That she will certainly be inclined to protect us if we look up to her is shown in this sloka by reference to worldly conduct.

वृषगिरिकृष्णमेघजनितां जनितापहरां
त्वदभिमतिं सुवृष्टिमुपजीव्य निवृत्ततृषः ।
बहुषु जलाशयेषु बहुमानमपोह्य दये
न जहति सत्पथं जगति चातकवत्कृतिनः ॥ (५८)

Vrishagirikrishnameghajanitaam janitaapaharaam
tvadabhimatim suvrishtim upajeevya nivrittatrishaha ।
Bahushu jalaasayeshu bahumaanam apohya Daye!
Na jahati satpatham jagathi chatakavat kritinaha ॥ (58)

Daya Devi! The blessed ones who depend entirely on the good showers (rain) in the shape of your good will, having its origin in the dark cloud that has its seat on Vrishagiri, and having the capacity to do away with the heat engendered by birth (and death), have their thirst quenched, and like the chaataka bird give up all thought of tanks and reservoirs in the world, and never stray from the good path (akasa).

Having established in and by the previous sloka that Daya is sure to bestow her favours on those who resort to her, Desika proceeds in this sloka to mention the benefits derived by those who depend on Daya. As usual he resorts to *upama.* The chaataka is a bird which depends solely on rain water for quenching its thirst. It is said that there is a hole in its throat which prevents it from drinking from ponds and pools with its beak down. It has its mouth open, always lifted upwards and opened wide, so that when the rain falls, the rain water gets into its body. The devotee of Daya is compared to that *chaataka* bird.

In sloka 45 Daya was likened to the clouds drawing water from Srinivasa, the water of Grace, and showering it on her devotees. In this sloka Srinivasa is said to be the cloud which pours rain. He is a Krishna megha, dark cloud, resting on Vrishagiri. Just as clouds hold water, this cloud is full of Karuna. This description recollects to one's mind Bhoja's beautiful description in the Champu Ramayana:

सन्तापघ्नं सकलजगतां शार्ङ्गचापाभिरामं
लक्ष्मीविद्युल्ललितं अतसीगुच्छसच्छायकायं ।
वैकुण्ठाख्यं मुनिजनमनश्चातकानां शरण्यं
कारुण्यापं त्रिदशपरिषट्कालमेघं ददर्श ॥

Desika has adopted this in the Hamsasandesa also where he sings

लक्ष्मीविद्युल्ललितवपुषं तत्र कारुण्यपूर्णं
मानैषीस्त्वं मरकतशिलामेचकं वीक्ष्य मेघं ।

In the Tattva Teeka Desika refers to the Lord of Kanchi as "Karisaila Krishnajaladaha kaankshitavarshee" करिशैलकृष्णजलदः काङ्क्षितवर्षी and in the same strain sings in the Yatiraja Saptati "Karisaila Krishnajaladaha Kaankshaadhikam varshati." करिशैलकृष्णजलदः काङ्क्षाधिकं वर्षति

Here it is Vrishagiri Krishna Megha. From that megha comes down a *suvrishti* (सुवृष्टि) (good and helpful downpour), not *ativrishti* (अतिवृष्टि) excessive downpour, nor *anaavrishti* (अनावृष्टि) no downpour at all. It is *Janitaapahara*, it dispels the taapa of samsara (birth and death). It consists in your (Daya's) abhimati (अभिमति) or prasada (favour). This is the sole support and sustenance to the *kriti* (blessed person) even as rain water is to the *chaataka* bird. By drinking in this grace of Daya, the *kritinaha* (blessed and fortunate persons) become *nivrittatrishaha* (निवृत्ततृषः) relieved of thirst. Thereafter they do not descend or condescend to look at the several jalaasayaas (जलाशयाः) water reservoirs, like tanks, lakes or even rivers.

And they soar in space and never swerve from the path of rectitude (satpatham). Vedanta Desika is never tired of emphasising the need for right conduct. He can never bring himself to condone lapses from moral conduct at any stage in life. After prapatti or saranagati is gone through, there is a tendency in the prapanna or saranagata to feel free from the "shackles of right conduct." The last paada of this sloka shows that such a tendency in the prapanna should be curbed and he must never swerve from the right path.

त्वदुदयतूलिकाभिरमुना वृषशैलजुषा
स्थिरचरशिल्पिनैव परिकल्पितचित्रधियः ।
यतिपतियामुनप्रभृतयः प्रथयन्ति दये
जगति हितं न नस्त्वयि भरन्यसनादधिकम् ॥ (५९)

Tvadudaya-toolikaabhiramuna Vrishasailajusha-
stirachara silpinaiva parikalpita chitradhiyaha ।
Yatipatiyaamunaprabhitayaha pratayanti Daye
jagati hitam nanastvayi bharanyasanaadadhikam ॥ (59)

Daya Devi! That king among ascetics (Ramanuja) and Yaamunacharya, and others like them, who had their beautiful minds (intellects) nicely sketched by this great painter residing in Vrishasaila (Tirumala), with capacity to paint immovable (unmoving) as well as movable (moving) objects with the help of His (Painter's) brush dipped in (the liquid paint that is) you,—have laid down that there is no greater or more potent means (for salvation) than surrender to you.

A very beautiful sloka as lofty in its poetry as in its sentiment.

The central idea contained in this sloka is that this Saranagati has been laid down to be the easiest and safest means of salvation by great acharyas. Two of them are mentioned by name, Yatipati and Yaamuna. The rest are indicated by the " etc." (prabrutayaha). Yatipati or chief among Sanyasins is of course the great Sri Vaishnava Acharya Ramanuja (1017—1137 A.D.) author of the famous Sri Bhashya (commentary on the Brahma Sutras). Yaamuna is Ramanuja's preceptors' (he had five of them) preceptor. He is more popularly known as Alavandar among Vaishnavaites, and was the grandson of Nathamuni, the first of the acharyas after Saint Satakopa (Nammalwar) in the heirarchy. In his famous Stotra Ratna Alavandar has sung of Saranagati in several places. Ramanuja has referred to Saranagati as the only means of captivating the Lord's heart—Tat-vaseekaranam tat-saranagatireva (तद्वशीकरणं तच्छरणागतिरेव) and has shown in and by his Saranagati Gadya (another work of his) the efficacy of Saranaagati as a direct means of salvation. As Ramanuja is mentioned first and then Yaamuna, and the word etc., follows, we have to take it that the poet is thinking of earlier acharyas like Nathamunigal and Nammalwar.

Why should so much importance be attached to their ideas and sentiments and conduct? The answer to that question is furnished by the first two lines of the sloka where it is pointed out that they are persons specially blessed by the Lord with knowledge and insight. This is described in a remarkably artistic manner by resort to the analogy of one of the arts—the art of painting. They are exceptional men because their minds—intellects—have been shaped by the Lord Himself. They are *Chitra-dhiyaha*, men with beautiful intellects, painted or sketched by the Lord Himself, that Lord who has His seat in Vrishasaila, the Tirumala Hill. He is referred to as a *silpi* or painter. Unlike ordinary painters who can paint and reproduce on canvas only static and immovable objects this Painter can paint not only such *Stira* objects but also *chara* (moving) objects. He is thus a *stira-chara-silpi* painter of both kinds of objects, mobile as well as static. He it was that sketched the beautiful intellect of those acharyas. So they are not capable of error or ignorance. The word " parikalpita " shows the extra love and care that the Lord must have bestowed in shaping and sketching their intellects.

The opening words of the sloka point to yet another and a very important and significant reason why those acharyas' upadesa and anushtana are worthy of acceptance by all right thinking men. They are Tvat-udaya-toolikabhihi—which govern the word " parikalpita." *Toolika* is the painter's brush, that with which he sketches on the canvas. Here the brush used by this *Silpi* (Lord Srinivasa) is one which exhudes Daya. *Udaya* is dawn, appearance. At the tip of the *toolika* (brush) there is Daya with which the minds of those acharyas have been sketched. In other words Daya is the paint, the water colour that is utilised to sketch the hearts of those great acharyas.

The full beauty and significance of the language employed in this sloka and the sentiment enshrined in it can be understood only if we remind ourselves of another sloka of this poet, (the ninth sloka in the 1st Canto in his beautiful kavya, Yadhavabhyudhaya) at the beauty and suggestiveness of which the great Appayya Deekshita was himself very much struck.

क्रीडतूलिकया स्वस्मिन् कृपारूषितया स्वयं ।
एको विश्वमिदं चित्रं विभुश्रीमानजीजनत् ॥

There also Lord Srinivasa—referred to there as Sreeman—is described as a painter, the sole and unaided painter of this cosmos. The brush He employs in the painting is Kreeda (sport) and the paint, Kripa, *i.e.*, Daya. The suggestion is that though Leela and Daya are both responsible for creation, Daya is the shaping and potent force, not leela or sport. In the painting we do not see the painter or the brush used by him; we see only the paint utilised to sketch the several objects painted. So too in creation it is Daya that is the shaping power and not sport, though no doubt it had a part in the process of creation. Whereas the Yadhabhyudhaya sloka refers to the painting of the entire cosmos, this Daya Sataka sloka refers only to the painting of the minds of the great acharyas. There is a total absence of Leela or sport in this painting. In sloka 47 above we saw how Daya is responsible for the Lord's production of helpful shaastra and Leela for binging out deceptive shaastras. So too in ordinary creation where there is a mixture of sport or leela with Daya or mercy, we find good and bad mixed together. But where Daya alone is, or prevails, nothing but unmixed good will result. There is no scope for Rajas and Tamas but it is pure Satva. This is the excellence attributed to the intellect of the great acharyas. They are therefore able to think out and expound truth unaffected by contact with ignorance, confusion, and such other imperfections that intellect is prone to. Their Siddhanta or theory is therefore free from all blemish and defect and must be followed by others.

What is their conclusion? It is that in this world there is no greater or more potent means of realising one's desires than seeking the help of Daya by surrendering ourselves to her in thought word and deed and placing ourselves unreservedly in her able and loving hands.

मृदुहृदये दये मृदितकामहिते महिते
    धृतविबुधे बुधेषु विततात्मधुरे मधुरे ।
वृषगिरिसार्वभौमदयिते मयि ते महतीं
    भवुकनिधे निधेहि भवमूलहरां लहरीम् ॥ (६०)

Mrudu hridaye! *Daye*! *Mridata-kama-hite*! *mahite*!
    Dhritavibudhe! *budheshu vitataatmadhure*! *madhure*! ।
Vrishagiri Saarvabhauma Dayite! *mayi te mahateem*
    Bhavukanidhe! *nidhehi bhavamoolaharaam lahareem* ॥ (60)

(1) Soft-hearted (2) Daya Devi! (3) ever watchful of the intensity of those who have quelled and subdued sense-desires, (4) celebrated by one and all, (5) supporter of the true gnanis, (6) entrusting your protecting burden to the great and learned ones (7) sweet by nature (8) ever beloved of that great Emperor of Vrishagiri; and (9) store house of all auspiciousness! pray turn towards me your immense flood capable of uprooting samsara (life and death).

Having talked about the efficacy of Saranagati and the part that Daya Devi plays in regard to this safe, certain and efficacious means of gaining one's desired end, Vedanta Desika in this sloka adopts that *upaya* (means) by praying to Daya to do away with his Samsaric ties, release him from the bondage of samsara (bhava) भव. This is the sloka in and by which Desika seeks refuge in Daya. In contains the nyasa or Saranagati—the chief part of it, known as the *angi.* The five *angas* or essential component parts are found distributed in the slokas of this decad thus:

Sloka 52 and 57 Aanukoolya Sankalpa

Sloka 57 Pratikoolya varjana

Sloka 56 and59 mahaavisvaasa

Sloka 51 Kaarpanya

Sloka 60 Goptrutva varana as well as the angi Saranagati.

This is the last sloka of this decad. Here again we see Desika following Nammalwar closely. It was by the last verse of the sixth பத்து *pattu* that Nammalwar performed prapatti at the Feet of Lord Srinivasa of Tiruvengadam. That verse is as follows:

அகலகில்லேன் இறையும் என்று அலர்மேல்மங்கைஉறைமார்பா!
நிகரில் புகழாய்! உலகம் மூன்றுடையாய்! என்னை ஆள்வானே!
நிகரில்அமரர் முணிக்கணங்கள் விரும்பும் திருவேங்கடத்தானே!
புகல்ஒன்றில்லா அடியேன் உன்னடிக்கீழ் அமர்ந்து புகுந்தேனே.
Tiru. VI. X. 10.

The Alwar's verse is addressed to the Lord of Tiruvengadam (திருவேங்கடத்தானே). Desika's sloka is addressed to Daya Devi. There four other Sambodanaas (addresses in the vocative case) for Tiruvengadathan. Here there are eight other sambodanas to Daya Devi; including *Daye!* (nine).

(1) Mrudu-hrudaye! Soft-hearted! This is the essense of Daya. She is always compassionate and sympathetic (as one of her names

Anu-kampa denotes) and her heart melts at the sight of pain and distress suffered by others and she rushes to their relief

(2) Daye! The usual address in this stotra.

(3) Mridita-kama-hite! Kama is desire, desire for worldly pleasures. Mridita-kaamaas are those who have crushed and quelled such desires. Daya takes charge of the true welfare (hita) of such persons and so she is addressed here as Mridita-Kama-hite!—Those whose hita or true welfare she has at heart are those who have crushed desires, and not those whom desires have crushed. The term Mridita-kama reminds us of the a-kaama–hata of the Anandavalli of Taittriyopanishad. Several gradations of ananda or bliss are talked of there in geometrical progression—starting from human ananda and ending with Brahmananda. But immediately after naming each particular ananda there is a refrain running through this part of that Upanishad to the effect that that pleasure or ananda pertains also to a Shrotriya who is an akamahata. श्रोत्रियश्चाकामहतश्च

The word *akaamahata* means one who is not destroyed by Kama. The Upanishad does not say a-kama, desireless, but akaamahata, not killed by desire. Desire there must be, but not for the small and evanescent pleasures yielding parimita-phalas (vide sloka 39 above). Desire for them will end in naasa नाश or destruction. The Kama must be for the Lord Himself. परमात्मन्योरक्तः विरक्तः अपरमात्मनि-One who has a desire for Paramatma will have no desire for other things *i.e.*, will have quelled and subdued all those other desires. And thus he becomes a mriditakama whose welfar Daya looks after.

(4) Mahite! means honoured, esteemed, revered, renowned: This whole Stotra must be taken to be explanatory of this term.

(5) Dhrita-vibudhe! supporting the truly learned! Those wh are truly learned have postulated that there is no greater and poten force for their protection than Daya Devi. And Daya Devi i her turn supports and protects such persons without putting the to the necessity of shifting for themselves.

(6) budheshu-vitata-aatma-dhure! you who have spread ou your burden of protection with (or among) the wise acharyas This is a very beautiful epithet employed by Desika to indicat that Daya Devi entrusts the safety and protection of those wh

look up to her for help and succour, to the great Acharyas who are beloved of the Lord, so beloved as to make Him refer to them in the Bhagavat Geeta as His Atma, (gnanee-tu-atmaiva-me-matam) and as very dear to Him (Sa-cha-mama-priyaha). The gnani of the Geeta is here referred to as Budaha (बुध:). Their greatness was indicated in the previous sloka by the words Vrishagiri-jushah-stira-chara-silpinaiva-parikalpita-chitra-dhiyaha. As they are repositories of Daya's protective qualities, ordinary men and women have to rely on them for redemption. This is known as the Acharya-nishta form of Saranagati.

(7) Madhure! Sweet! By nature Daya Devi is sweet and attractive, even as a mother is to the baby.

(8) Vrishagiri-sarvabhauma-dayite! Beloved of the Emperor of Vrishagiri! Daya is one of the Consorts of Lord Srinivasa. It has been said before that the other Consorts like Sri, Bhoo and Neela Devis are dear to the Lord because the Lord sees Daya reflected in them. (Sloka 36).

(9) Bhavuka-nidhe! Storehouse of all mangalam (auspiciousness)! The very first description of Daya in this Sloka was as an akinchana-nidhi (treasure-house for the helpless). That nidhi or treasure is here pointed out to be a bhavuka-nidhi, a treasure of auspiciousness.

After having thus called Daya in nine different ways, Sri Desika makes known to her his prayer in the words " mayi-te-mahateem-bhavamoola-haraam-lahareem-nidhehi,"-pray divert towards me your mighty floods capable of uprooting this great tree of Samsara. That is to say, please destroy my connection with Samsara and bestow on me the beatitude of the Highest Bliss. The nature and the content of that Bliss have already been described in detail in the fifth decad.

Thus the sixth decad of this Stotra concludes with the performance of *prapatti* by Desika even as the sixth Centurium of Verse in Nammalwar's Tiruvoimozhi ends with the Alwar's *anushtaana* (practice) of prapatti. The effect of this anushtana or practice of prapatti is seen in the following decads. The twofold aspect of the help that Daya renders to prapannas, *viz.*, Anishta-nivritti and Ishta-praapti (Removal of undesired fruits and realisation of desired fruits respectively) is described in detail in the succeeding decads.

श्रीमते निगमान्तमहादेशिकाय नमः

श्री श्रीनिवास परब्रह्मणे नमः

॥ दयाशतकम् ॥

DAYAA SATAKAM

SEVENTH DECAD.

IN this decad the poet demonstrates the several ways in which Daya Devi brings about the safety and welfare of those who take refuge in her and rely on her entirely for their spiritual safety and protection. *Anishta*—the undesired results and adverse effects are done away with by Daya. She strives to achieve that end in several different ways. Daya's supremacy in action is very well brought out in this decad. The Lord was demonstrated by Nammalwar in the seventh patthu (பத்து) of his Tiruvoimozhi as an Anishta-Vidhvamsa-seelaha (**अनिष्ठ विद्वंसशीलः**). Daya Devi is here shown by Desika to be even cleverer and more consummate than the Lord Himself in destroying the devotee's unwished-for evil fruits.

The metre employed is 'Sikharini'. As already mentioned. this is also a *samavritta* with seventeen syllables in each paada. In at least five out of the ten slokas of this decad (62 and 66 to 69) the word 'Sikhari' can be seen to occur. The only other place in this stotra where Vrishaba-sikhari occurs is sloka 35.

अकूपारैरेकोदकसमयवैतण्डिकजवै-
रनिर्वाप्यां क्षिप्रं क्षपयितुमविद्याख्यबडबाम् ।
कृपे त्वं तत्तादृक्प्रथिमवृषपृथ्वीधरपति-
स्वरूपद्वैगुण्यद्विगुणनिजबिन्दुः प्रवहसि ॥ (६१)

Akooparairekodhaka samaya vaithandika javaihi
Anirvaapyam kshipram kshapayitum avidhyaakhyabadabaam ।
Kripe! tvam tattadrk pratima Vrishapratvee dharapatihi
Swaroopa dvaigunyadviguna nijabindu pravahasi ॥ (61).

Kripa Devi! You flow in abundance (even like a flood). Even one drop of you which is four times as great and as potent as the Swaroopa (or essential nature) of that great Lord of Vrishaachala, whose greatness is beyond human understanding,—is sufficient to quickly quench that great fire known as *avidya* which is unquenchable, even like the sub-marine fire (badabaanala) which the vast waters of the seven seas, seas,—which join together during pralaya (when the world is one sheet of water), with as great force and speed as those of the pointless wrangling arguments (of a class of controversialists known as *vitandavaadins*), are unable to quench.

In the previous sloka reference was made to Daya's mahatee-bhavamoola-haraa-laharee, or the great and mighty samsara-destroying flood. The idea runs into this sloka and that *laharee* or flood of Daya is set off against the great floods caused by the meeting of the seas during pralaya, when the entire cosmos is enveloped in water. It is pointed out that one drop of the flood of Daya is able to accomplish what the entirety of that huge flood during pralaya is unable to achieve. Water has the capacity to quench fire. But there is a fire within the sea, a sub-marine fire known in Hindu Mythology as the Badaba (also Vadaba) anala. It is so called as it is supposed to have the face of a vadaba or mare. Though it is within the sea it is never put out or quenched by the waters of the sea. On the other hand it feeds on water as if water were fuel and for that reason is abindana अबिन्धन, When all the seas meet in pralaya even then this fire is not quenched. This is what is referred to in the first half of this sloka.

Ekodaka-samaya; the time when it is all water, *i.e.*, Pralaya. Akooparaihi—by the seas. The speed and force with which the seas mingle at the time of pralaya are indicated by a very appropriate simile. That speed and that force are compared to the speed and the force with which words flow from the mouths of Vithandaa-vaadins during argumentations. A vithandaavaadin or vaithandika is one who is out to indulge in captious arguments and destructive criticism. He is not bothered with the establishment of any Siddhanta or conclusion. He has none of his own, or even if he has one, he does not care for it. All that he is anxious to bring about is a volume of words calculated to counter and oppose the opponent's viewpoint. He drowns himself, and intends to drown his opponents, in a maze of ponderous and highsounding words leading nowhere. It is all words, words, words. This is compared to the waters of the seas surging with the same amount of force or vehemence at the time of pralaya. There also the waters do not pause to submerge only the good things or only the bad things of the world. They submerge every thing,—good, bad and indifferent. Vedanta Desika's contempt for this sort of argumentation is very pointedly noticeable here.

Just as ignorance is not dispelled by the empty and noisy argumentation of the Vaithandika, the sub-marine fire is not quenched by the seas in spite of their force and vehemence.

The central theme of the sloka is that the avidya that is not quenchable otherwise is easily dispelled by Daya. Or, to give the sloka its full import, avidya (here it means Karma) which the Lord is unable to put an end to, is very effectively wiped out by Daya.

This idea is mentioned in the second half of the sloka. Readers may remember how in sloka 13 ante, it was said that the high placed Lord Srinivasa was submerged in the flood of Daya. This sloka elaborates the idea and postulates that Daya is bigger than the Lord Himself.

The true nature (swaroopa) of the Lord is such that beyond saying that it is that, and it is this, no one can really fully or wholly comprehend it. As Tondaradippodi Alwar has put it in the Tirumaalai பெருமை ஒன்று உணரலாகாது and வணங்கி நாம் இருப்பதல்லால், பேசத்தான் ஆவதுண்டோ? (His greatness is beyond comprehension. Beyond merely worshipping Him can we ever talk of Him?) That is His greatness. The word Brahman itself signifies big, vast.

Take that swaroopa. Multiply it by two. Then again multiply that product by two. That, if you can really comprehend it, is equated with a drop of Daya. In other words a drop (bindu) of Daya is equal to four times the dimension of the Lord's swaroopa. The sloka however does not say four times, but says twice its double —a rather quaint way of referring to four. One is reminded of Andal's ஈரிரண்டு (twice two) in the closing verse of Tiruppavai. Infinity doubled is infinity. Infinity quadrupled is also infinity. But one stands aghast at the immensity of the quadrupled infinity. At once it is pointed out that a drop of Daya is equal to that quadrupled infinity. And we are left to imagine what a flood of Daya will come to or be like on this scale. Can the greatness and immensity of Daya be dealt with in a better or a more effective form?

It is not mere poetry but a great truth. Daya's swaroopa it is that has to come to our rescue and unless it is so big and immense, she cannot consume our (Karma) sins. The nature of our sins was pointed out in sloka 34 above. Daya has got to be that immense to drown our sins.

There is a *paata* or rendering for the last word as ' prabhavasi ' (प्रभवसि) which means ' you are capable or competent (to effectuate the destruction of avidya). But the word *pravahasi* adopted here is more apt and significant in view of the previous sloka and the other words in this sloka. (61).

विवित्सावेतालीविगमपरिशुद्धेऽपि हृदये
पटुप्रत्याहारप्रभृतिपुटपाकप्रचकिताः ।
नमन्तस्त्वां नारायणशिखरिकूटस्थ करुणे
निरुद्धत्वद्द्रोहा नृपतिसुतनीतिं न जहति ॥ (६२)

Vivitsaavetalee vigamaparisuddhepi hridaye
Patupratyaahara prabhrutiputapaaka prachakitaaha ।
Namantastvaam Narayanasikhari kootasta karune!
Niruddha tvadrohaa nripatisuta neetim na jahati. ॥ (62).

Karuna of the Lord of Naarayanaachala! Even those who have purified their hearts by driving out the she-demon of endless desires, being afraid of the arduous process of Bhaktiyoga, which involves having to go through fire by undergoing the hard discipline of controlling the senses and so on, pay their obeisance (resort) to you, *i.e.*, **surrender themselves unto you. Thereafter they eschew all treachery and malevolence towards you, and do not give up (***i.e.***, they follow) the rule of the King's son, heir to the throne.**

As Saranagati had been adopted and practised in the sixth decad, this next decad sets out the *uttarakritya* उत्तरकृत्य or the conduct during the post-prapatti period of a prapanna's life. Several cardinal doctrines that a prapanna ought to know and adopt are set out in this and succeeding decads.

The first half of the sloka explains why even those who have been able to subdue their desires for earthly objects such as wealth and sexual pleasures seek refuge at Daya's feet. The first line of the verse describes the process by which purity of heart is secured by driving out the she-demon (Vethaala) of various and multipointed desire. Those who have so purified their hearts by cleansing them of desire still hesitate to pursue the time-honoured path of Bhaktiyoga laid down in the Upanishad, and which Sri Krishna so elaborately explained in the Gita, because they are afraid to pursue that ambitious and long-drawn out process. Puta-paaka is the process which drugs are subjected to, by being wrapped in leaves etc., and roasted in fire. In general, it signifies going through fire, with all that that English phrase connotes.

Pratyaahaara is one of the eight angaas or parts of Bhaktiyoga. It means the withdrawal and control of the senses—not by any means an easy task for any one, especially in these days. It is *patu*, violent. It is not all. It is only one of the several as indicated by the 'prabritibihi' that follows. So they resort to you and pay obeisance to you (Namantastvaam).

The last line of the sloka emphasises the need in a prapanna to be faithful and true to Daya Devi, who has promised to wipe out his karma and confer on him freedom from the shackles of Karma, which is the negative aspect of mukti, union with the Lord being its positive content. The words 'niruddha-tvat-drohaa' put this idea of the prapanna's faithfulness to Daya in a negative manner. They mean, having prevented treachery to Daya creeping in. To continue to break the moral and spiritual laws is to be faithless to Daya. These words are reminicent of the words 'mama drohee' of the Gita. That state, they avoid. We may here remind ourselves of the words 'Na-jahati-satpatham-jagati' employed in sloka 58 to describe the state of a kriti or blessed one (prapanna).

The Rajakumara-nyaya referred to at the end of the sloka by the words 'Nripati-suta-neeti' stresses the importance of not erring in future and at the same time indicates the hopes and aspirations engendered in the prapanna's heart by the prapatti he has performed with *mahaaviswasa* महाविश्वास or full faith in Daya's redemptive grace. The son of a King, and heir-apparent to the throne, has to be more careful than an ordinary man in regard to his conduct. The smallest foible in him will not be tolerated and if ever he comes to be guilty of it, he will not go unpunished. He must be aware of it. So too the prapanna who is the heir-apparent to the moksha-saamrajya—the kingdom of Heaven, has to keep a very watchful eye on his conduct and avoid all errors of commission and omission in his post-prapatti life. If any aparaadha (sin) is committed by him unawares (abuddhi-poorvaka) he must be prepared to atone for it and/or receive and undergo the punishment for it. By the time however this life of his comes to an end, he steps into the Heavenly abode, entirely sinless, just as the Crown Prince becomes King at the proper time.

This sloka contains the gist of two or three chapters of Srimad Rahasyatrayasara, as those who have studied that work will see for themselves.

In this sloka for the first time this Sacred Hill, Tirumala, is referred to as Naarayana-sikhari. Naaraayanaachala नारायणाचल is one of the puranic names of Tirumala.

अनन्याधीनस्सन् भवति परतन्त्रः प्रणमतां
कृपे सर्वद्रष्टा न गणयति तेषामपकृतिम् ।
पतिस्त्वत्पारार्थ्यं प्रथयति वृषक्ष्माधरपति-
र्व्यवस्थां वैयात्यादिति विघटयन्ती विहरसि ॥ (६३)

Ananyadheenassan bhavati paratantra pranamataam
Kripe! sarvadrashtaa naganayati teshaam apakritim ।
Patistvatpaaraartyam pratyati Vrishakshmaadharapatir
Vyavastaam vaiaatyaditi vighatayantee viharasi ॥ (63).

Kripa Devi! The Lord of Vrishaachala,—though He is by nature subject and subservient to no one,—subjects and subjugates Himself to those who are His Saranaagataas: though He is omniscient and can see everything, He does not take count of His Saranaagataa's errors. He is your pathi (Lord) but in regard to you He plays the role of a follower. Thus you by your audaciousness sport (take a delight) in breaking all settled rules.

Daya Devi is here demonstrated to be a revolutionary, a breaker of laws, and an upsetter of conventions and settled ways and rules. How she wields sway over the Lord of all, and Her Lord too, is very nicely pointed out. In three ways the Lord is said to act against His own nature.

He is an *ananyaadheena*—subject and subservient to no one else. Yet Daya makes of Him a willing dependent on His *Pranamataas* (those who have done prapatti to Him) and look to Him as their all. He goes on errands for them. He drives a chariot, nay He even brushes and bathes their chariots' horses, as Leela Sukha has sung.

He is a *sarvadhrashta*, one who sees everything. Yet He is blind to His Saranaagataa's foibles; for He pardons them all. He is in fact an avignaata अविज्ञाता as the Sahasranaama says—one who does not know.

He is patim-visvasya पतिं विश्वस्य and also your (Daya's) pati—Lord. But He delights in displaying and publishing His subservience to you. He is a *Seshi* शेषि to all the world. But He is a *sesha* शेष to you.

In this threefold manner the change in the Lord's swabhava or nature is mentioned in the first three *paadaas* of the sloka, which winds up by stating in its last quarter that thus Daya destroys boundaries, limitations, and laws. Her audaciousness is born of the Lord's fancy for her objectives in regard to the redemption of mankind, a fondness and fancy well brought out in several earlier slokas.

The sentiments of this sloka appear to belittle the Lord. But in truth and fact they give pointed prominence to His true greatness. Does He not claim and proclaim in the Bhagavad Gita that the Gnani—to whom the Lord is everything (Vasudevas-sarvam) वासुदेवः सर्वं is His soul?—Gnanee-tu-atmaiva-me-matam. ज्ञानी तु आत्मैव मे मतम् "The gnani probably thinks that I am his soul: in truth and fact he is My soul." A Lord who can say so about Himself can well afford to be described as Daya Devi's follower—Seshabhuta—शेषभूत.

The several ways in which Daya Devi functions to bring about this result are elaborated in the succeeding slokas.

अपां पत्युः शत्रूनसहनमुनेर्धर्मनिगलं
कृपे काकस्यैकं हितमिति हिनस्तिस्म नयनम् ।
विलीनस्वातन्त्र्यो वृषगिरिपतिस्त्वद्विहृतिभि-
दिशत्येवं देवो जनितसुगतिं दण्डनगतिम् ॥ (६४)

Apaampatyussatroon asahanamunerdharma nigalam
Kripe! Kaakasyaikam hitamiti hinastisma nayanam ।
Vileenasvatantryo Vrishagiripatistvad vihritibhihi
Disatyevam Devo janitasugatim dandanagatim ॥ (64).

Kripa Devi! The Lord of Vrishagiri, deprived of independence as He is by your sportive acts,—destroyed the enemies of (Varuna) the lord of the waters (rivers), the shackles in the form of righteous conduct in the case of that intolerant *muni*, Parasurama, and one eye of the crow (who molested Sita Devi),—as being calculated in each case to be for the betterment of that person. He thus confers punishment productive of good and desirable results.

The revolution wrought by Daya Devi in the very nature of the Lord was dealt with in the previous sloka. In this sloka the poet deals with the revolution she works in the fates of those who have committed wrongs and are therefore condemned to receive punishment. Three instances of punishment proving to be rewards in the ultimate result are mentioned, and from them is derived a great truth and a grand theory about the place of punishment in divine dispensation. Sriman V. V. Srinivasa Iyengar of revered memory used to say that this sloka contains Vedanta Desika's conception of the Theory of Evil, and the place of punishment in the scheme of the world order. Modern definitions of punishment have banished the early and crude ideas of a tooth for a tooth and a nail for a nail, and postulate the purpose of punishment as redemptive in its essence. This was the idea envisaged by Desika more than six hundred years ago.

All the three instances are taken from the Ramayana. The first of them is about Varuna (Samudraraja) and is found in the Yuddhakanda. Acting on the advice of Vibishana who had just seen for himself the great efficacy of Saranagati, Sri Rama proposes to perform Saranagati to the lord of the seas to obtain his favour thereby to enable Him and His huge army to cross the ocean. As there was no response from the sea-king even after the lapse of some days, Rama becomes angry and threatens to dry up the ocean (Sagaram Soshayishyami). At once the Sea-king appears in person and prays for Rama's pardon. Anger in Rama immediately vanishes, but the destructive arrow intended to finish the sea-king cannot go unappeased. So at the request of Varuna himself it is aimed at the enemies of that king and destroys them. What was intended as a punishment to Varuna resulted in the annihilation of his enemies and thus conferred a boon and a benefit on him.

Even one's good deeds can hamper one's spiritual progress. That was the case with Parasurama. Born of the great sage Jamadagni, Parasurama had ever so much of Dharma or righteous conduct to his credit. That however was only useful to egg him on to measure his strength against Sri Rama. Foiled in his attempt to overpower Sri Rama, he confessed to his being vanquished by that great Dharma-moorty and exclaimed " Akshayyam Madhuhantaaram jaanaami tvaam sureswaram" अक्षय्यम् मधुहन्तारं जानामि त्वां सुरेश्वरम्. Abashed at his previous attitude of defiance and haughtiness—the result of accumulated dharma—he hung his head in shame and prayed लोकास्त्वप्रतिमाराम निर्जितास्तपसा मया । जहिता ञ्छरमुख्येन मा भूत्कालस्य पर्ययः ॥ (Bala 76-16) when that Karunamoorthy Rama who had bent the Vaishnavachaapa (Vishnu's bow) handed to Him, asked for a target for the arrow mounted on it; and at that request of Parasurama aimed it at his—Parasurama's—good deeds, that had proved to be a *nigala* or chain arresting progress. Note the reference to Parasurama as ' asahanamuni '—the intolerant sage—an apparent contradiction in terms; but that correctly describes Parasurama. The compound word dharma-nigalam, chain or trammel in the shape of good and righteous deeds, is also very significant.

The third instance is that of the crow who molested Sita Devi in Chitrakoota. Though he was Indra's son he is referred to as Kaakaasura काकासुर for having acted like an asura (or demon) in the form of a crow. Unlike the Sea-King and Parasurama this crow was a great sinner, an aardraaparaadhi आर्द्रापराधि (wet sinner). He had hurt Jaganmaata (Sita Devi) and inflicted wounds on her sacred body. Rama as soon as he saw what that crow had done, took a grass, consecrated it with Brahmaastra, and aimed it at the crow. The crow took to its heels, or rather began to fly, in a vain attempt at escaping that missile aimed at him. Somehow it felt that it can save itself by falling at Rama's feet. And after having gone round all the worlds it came and fell at His feet praying for protection: त्रीन् लोकान् संपरिक्रम्य तमेव शरणं गतः. What happened then is beautifully described by Sita Devi herself who was a witness to this scene:

स तं निपतितं भूमौ शरण्यः शरणागतम् ।
वधार्हमपि काकुत्स्थः कृपया पर्यपालयत् ॥

(Sundarakanda 37–Sloka 34.)

This is the essence of Rama's protective grace. Though the crow eminently deserved destruction, Rama protected him—Jayanta in the form of a crow. But the *astra* (arrow) cannot go in vain. One of the two eyes of the crow was destroyed so that it may do only half of the mischief it is prone to do with both eyes intact. Is this punishment or protection? 'Kripayaa paryapaalayat'—Rama protected with the help of Kripa or grace. That is why this sloka employs the word Kripa. The Ramayana sloka can be seen to run in the poet's mind.

All these apparently irreconcilable acts are attributed to Daya Devi's sportful ways. She takes a delight in reversing the Lord's decision to punish. Punishment strictly so called may be all right in cases of persons whose motto is 'I can never bend my head in obeisance to any one' न नमेयं तु कस्यचित्. But in cases of persons like those referred to here where the aparradhin (sinner) has repented and said Namaste and/or jitam-te (I am conquered) by you, the punishing mood in a merciful person will change into a benevolent and rewarding mood. To the extent that the Lord's desire to punish is thwarted, to that extent He is said to be one unable to hold His own. Vileena-swatantrayaha—'विलीनस्वातन्त्र्यः: —Bereft of Independence.

Disati-evam-janita-sugatim, dandana-gatim. Thus the Lord confers punishment which is productive of good results.

Dandana-vidhim is an alternative rendering. It means the order to punish.

Pausing here for a moment one can see the several graded ways in which Karma and Karma-phala are done away with by Daya, as described in slokas 61 to 64. In sloka 61 it was total annihilation of Karma. In 62 the parapanna's fear of future sins creeping in was adverted to by referring to the rule of the Raja kumara who is certain that he will receive punishment in some form for his errors of commission and omission. In the next sloka Daya is said to make the Lord forget, or rather fail to note, our sins and transgressions. In this sixty-fourth sloka even when the Lord determines to punish, Daya Devi transforms and converts that determination and that punishment into a benevolent and rewarding determination, calculated (of course only in proper cases) for the benefit of the sinner.

Working in such revolutionary ways, and adopting highly drastic measures. Daya protects those that rely on her for help and protection.

निषादानां नेता कपिकुलपतिः कापि शबरी
कुचेलः कुब्जा सा व्रजयुवतयो माल्यकृदिति ।
अमीषां निम्नत्वं वृषगिरिपतेरुन्नतिमपि
प्रभूतैः स्रोतोभिः प्रसभमनुकम्पे समयसि ॥ (६५)

Nishaadanaam netaa kapikulapathihi kaapi sabaree
Kuchelah kubjaa saa vrajayuvatayo maalyakriditi ।
Ameeshaam nimnatvam vrishagiripaterunnatimapi
Prabhuthaissrothobhihi prasabham anukampe! *samayasi*॥ (65).

Anukampe! You forcefully reduce to the same level the lowness of (1) the chief among hunters (Guha) (2) the King of the race of monkeys (Sugreeva), (3) some nameless hunter-woman (Sabari), (4) Kuchela (the proverbially poor person), (5) that famous Kubja (a bent woman with a hunchback), (6) the young damsels of Gokula, and (7) a maker of garlands, and the high-ness of the Lord of Vrishagiri, by the immensity of your flow (flood).

One of the noblest attributes of the Lord is Sauseelya. It is defined as Mahato-mandaissaha-neerandhra-samslesham महतो-मन्दैस्सह नीरन्ध्रसंश्लेषं or the intimate and free mixing of the inordinately great ones with the very low ones. This trait is specially known as "*Guna*." Though all good and auspicious attributes are *gunaas* strictly so called, this particular trait is specially indicated when one talks of '*guna*' simpliciter. c.f. Gunavaan गुणवान्, the first of the sixteen traits which Valmiki mentions to Narada in the opening sarga of the Ramayana. Also the same word 'gunavaan' used by Alavandar in his Stotra-Ratna as one among the 12 gunas specified by him in the sloka beginning. 'Vasee Vadanyo....................' This *Seela* शील in the Lord is what is most helpful to His devotees. This sloka very nicely points out that it is Daya Devi that is responsible for the presence of this much-sought-after and much-praised *guna* in the Lord. Seven instances—all of them famous—three of them from the Ramayana, and four from the Bhagavata are referred to as indicative of lowness. Guha, the hunter-chief is the first among them. About him Rama has said that he is His 'Atma-Samassakha' आत्मसमस्सखा, a friend as dear to me as my own life. Next comes Sugreeva, the King of the monkeys. Rama's friendship with him was of such intensity that on one occasion Rama exclaimed. "Of what use is Sita Devi to me if some small evil happens to you त्वयि किञ्चित समापन्ने कि कार्यं सीतया मम. That was the extent to which Rama loved Sugreeva. Sabari, the hunter-woman, whose hospitality to Rama is a household word, is referred to next. Sabari means a woman of the hunter class. This lady had no other name by which she was known. So *Kaapi Sabari* may be taken to indicate some nameless hunter woman. ‘Kaapi’ has however been used here to show that a peerless lady bearing the name Sabari is indicated. Rama was her guest, and gladly and willingly ate of what she had carefully put by as sweet and delicious in anticipation of His arrival.

Rama was the acme of modesty and one will not be surprised at His moving intimately and freely with Guha, Sugreeva, or Sabari. But the Lord Krishna, a God from birth, born as a God and not as a man, having to His credit several deeds from boyhood to manhood which are distinctly superhuman—what about Him? Daya Devi renders Him too accessible to one and all in the lower strata of society. Kuchela (meaning dirty-and-torn-cloth-man) is a picture and model of poverty; Kubja of ugliness; Gopis, of unlettered ignorance; and *maalakaara* a vendor of fragrant garlands and flowers, not one among which would he have for his own use. And with all of them, Sri Krishna mixed freely and on equal terms. The reception He gave Kuchela should ever serve as an ideal for small minded rich men to follow, persons who will not deign even to recognise in a poorer man an old-time friend or classmate. Kubja means bent woman, a hunch-back. A lady with this defect in her body was preparing sandal paste for Kamsa's use. While she was taking some sandal one day to Kamsa, she met Balarama and Krishna in the streets of Muttra. At once she willingly offered the sandal to those lovely youngsters. Krishna immediately rewarded her by relieving her of her hunch back and converting her into a young and handsome damsel. The first act of that lady then was to catch hold of his *uttariya* (upper garment) and drag Him towards herself. Thereby Krishna earned one of his 108 names (Ashtottara-sata-namaas) namely ‘Kubjaa-krishtaambaradharaha’ कुब्जाकृष्टाम्बरधरः. There is a Kubja (कुब्ज) in the Ramayana, whose name stinks; as much as that of her Bhagavata counterpart exhudes fragrance. So to demonstrate that it is not the evil and inimical *kubja*, but the devoted and loving Kubja, it is said here ‘Kubja-saa,’ *that* Kubja.

The Gopis are referred to next as the young damsels of Vraja (Gokula). They are noted for their lack of urbanity and for their utter ignorance. They themselves describe their rustic and unsophisticated nature when they sing

कथं पुनर्नः प्रतियास्यतेऽबला ग्राम्याः सलज्जास्मित भ्रमैर्भ्रमन् ।

(Bhagavatha 10—39—24).

Andal has celebrated their ignorance by singing about their race as *அறிவு ஒன்றும் இல்லா ஆய்க்குலம்*, the race of Gopis which has not an iota of knowledge. What Krishna was to them is too well known to be dilated upon here. Maalyakrit,—the maker of garlands. Krishna with his brother Balarama went to this persons's house and he rushed forward to greet them with the exclamation

प्रसाद परमौनाथौ मम गेहमुपागतौ ।
धन्योऽहं अर्चयिष्यामि........... ॥

Vedanta Desika sees with his devoted and poetical eye the mingling of the great Lord with these seven types of persons. At once he reminds himself of the unimaginable eminence उन्नति of the Lord. And he gasps with wonder at the work of Daya Devi that has effectively wiped out the difference between His eminence and their depths (each in a particular direction, and reduced them all to the same level. Nothing but Daya's terrific flow can achieve this result of bringing down mountains and filling up valleys. And he sings to that effect by saying that by her *prabhootha* (immense) srotas, (flow or flood) she levels up forcibly, violently प्रसभंसमयसि. But for Daya and her capacity, the Lord will ever have been beyond the reach of mortals, and the mortals could never dream of contacting Him at all, much less intimately; and the twain would never have met.

त्वया दृष्टस्तुष्टिं भजति परमेष्ठी निजपदे
वहन्मूर्तीरष्टौ विहरति मृडानीपरिबृढः ।
बिभर्ति स्वाराज्यं वृषशिखरिशृङ्गारि करुणे
शुनासीरो देवासुरसमरनासीरसुभटः ॥ (६६)

Tvaya Drishtastushtim Bhajati Parameshtheenijapade
vahanmoortheerashtau viharati mrudaneeparibrudhaha ।
Bibharthi swaarajyam vrishasikharisringari karune
Sunaseeuro Devasurasamaranaaseerasubhataha ॥ (66)

O! Karuna of the Ornament of the Vrishagiri crest! By being the recipient of your glances (drishti) the four-faced Brahma rejoices in (the enjoyment of) his position. Similarly, seen by you, the Consort of Parvati sports by taking the eightfold forms. Indra too, because he is seen by you, gets renown as a front rank warrior in the battle between the Devas and the Asuras, and rules over his kingdom.

In the fifth decad reference was made to Brahma, Siva, and other gods in several places—vide Slokas 41, 42 and 50. In sloka 50 especially it was said that they were all really tied down to their posts. Sloka 53 gave us the idea that what status they possess has really been conferred on them by Daya Devi according to their deserts. Here it is stated plainly that their enjoyment in their respective positions or posts is really a boon conferred on them by Daya Devi. It is attributed to her *drishti* दृष्टि or looks. Not only moksha, the ultimate beatitude,—but all enjoyments of a pleasurable and desirable nature are Daya's gifts.

First comes Brahma who is referred to as a Parameshti—a superior or supreme person. This name occurs as one of the names of the Lord Himself in the Sri Vishnu Sahasranama). By Daya's *drishti* दृष्टि he is said to obtain *tushti* तुष्टि (happiness) in his position as Brahma the Creator, the constant reciter of the Vedas, and so on.

If Brahma enjoys happiness, Paramasiva is said to revel in sport. Not content with the enjoyment pertaining to one form or *moorti*, मूर्ति, he takes eight different forms or moortis, and imbibes sportive pleasures through the several of them. The eight forms he is said to take are the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, and akaasa or ether), the sun, the moon, and *hotri*, होत्री, the sacrificer. Siva was referred to as the Tarunendu-vibhooshana, तरुणेन्दुविभूषण in sloka 53, one who is adorned by the young (crescent) moon. Here he is referred to as mridaanee-paribradhaha मृडानीपरिबृढः. Mridaha मृडः is an epithet of Siva, *Mridaa* मृडा and *Mridaanee* मृडानी of Parvathi—*mridaanee-paribridhaha* is again Siva, the Consort of Parvati. Thus Siva is referred to with reference to Parvati and Parvati with reference to Siva. The Ardhanari concept is indicated here by the employment of the term mridaanee-paribridhaha to denote Paramasiva.

Indra, the King of Devaloka is next referred to. The term त्वया दृष्टः tvaya drishtaha governs all the three words used here to indicate Brahma, Siva and Indra respectively. *Sunaseeraha* सुनासीर: is an epithet of Indra. He is said to obtain by Daya-Kataaksha not only the ability to rule over his kingdom (Svaaraajyam) स्वाराज्यं but also to be in the vanguard of the frequent battles between the Devas and the Asuras.

Lord Srinivasa is referred to in this sloka as Vrishasikhari-sringaari वृषशिखरि शृङ्गारि He who adorns the crest or peak of Vrishagiri. His Karuna is therefore addressed as Vrishasikhari Sringaari Karune! It may also be taken to mean the Karuna of the beautiful Lord of Vrishagiri.

दये दुग्धोदन्वद्व्यतियुतसुधासिन्धुनयत-
स्त्वदाश्लेषान्नित्यं जनितमृतसंजीवनदशाः ।
स्वदन्ते दान्तेभ्यः श्रुतिवदनकर्पूरगुळिका
विषुण्वन्तश्चित्तं वृषशिखरिविश्वंभरगुणाः ॥ (६७)

Daye dugdhodanvad-vyatiyuta sudhaasindhunayataha
tvadaasleshaan-nityam janitamrita sanjeevana dasaaha ।
Svadante daantebhyaha Srutivadanakarpooragulikaa
vishunvantas-chittam Vrishasikharivisvambharagunaaha ॥ (67).

Daya Devi! Because of your intimate and close contact, with the (other) attributes (gunas) of that great Protector of this world residing in Vrishaa-chala, like the mixing of the ocean of milk and the ocean of nectar, those gunas are being (tastefully) enjoyed by those who have conquered the senses (and set their hearts on the Lord), as having the capacity to bring to life even dead persons, as a ball of camphor giving fragrance to the mouth of Dame Sruti, and as calculated to squeeze, out of ecstacy, the minds of devotees contemplating on them.

Brahma, Rudra and Indra were said by the previous sloka to be the recipients of Daya's favour. Now it is pointed out that even the Lord's own gunas get exalted by an association with her. Without Daya all the other great qualities of the Lord were pointed out to be faults or blemishes (doshas). That was in sloka 15 *ante*. The grandeur and glory of those very attributes when they are embraced by Daya (*i.e.*, intimately associated with Daya) are enjoyed in this sloka. It has been pointed out in the foregoing slokas of this decad that Daya has got that great capacity of destroying *anishta* अनिष्ट; so the other qualities when harnessed to Daya lose their propensity to confer anishta on sinners, and acquire when acting in concert with her great name and fame. It has been said that they furnish rich flavour and taste. Svadante स्वदन्ते To whom? Not to us who give free scope for the senses to work havoc with our spiritual progress. Only to the दान्तेभ्य: (Danthebhyaha) those who have controlled their senses and have purified their hearts, as pointed out in the first paada (quarter) of sloka 62, by banishing desire for worldly pleasures. How do they regard Daya, and how does Daya appeal to them? A fourfold answer is furnished by this sloka to that question.

By intimate contact with Daya, the other qualities get mingled with that greatest and noblest of traits, like the blending of the milk ocean with the nectar ocean. From the milk ocean—when it was churned—poison came out, it is said. So milk ocean can yield not only very good things like elephants, horses, moon and kalpaka tree, but also poison. The other qualities of the Lord are like that, capable of functioning for good as well as for bad. Daya is the ocean of nectar and nothing but good—nay the very best—will be found there.

The second feature dealt with here is really a corollary of the first. Janita-mrita-sanjeevana dasaaha जनितमृतसंजीवनदशा:—Enlivening dead persons. Being *amrta* अमृत or nectar, no wonder death is banished and even the dead begin to live (vide Slokas 12 and 22)

The third relates to the *rasa* रस that the Srutis find in those gunas of the Lord. The Vedas are referred to as a Damsel who uses fragrant camphor-globules to give sweetness and flavour to her mouth. It has always been the fashion for ladies of status for sweetening their breath to use small pills like Kasturi-pills or Pachaikkarpoora (camphor) pills. The great and famous *Veda-maata* वेदमाता uses these attributes, gunas, of the Lord as such *gulikas* गुलिका: (small balls or pills) and thereby her noble mouth exhudes fragrance. Obviously the reference is to the fact that the Srutis extol the great gunas of the Lord and that is the reason for their far-flung greatness and glory. Elsewhere Desika has referred to his own speech or work as sprihaneeya-saurabha-mucha-vaacha स्पृहणीय सौरभमुचा वाचा. The excellence of the Vedas lies in their extolling the gunas of the Lord, and not in taking great pains to deny that the Lord has any gunaas at all. *Vadana* वदन means face and also mouth. Mouth stands not only for taste but also for speech The sweetness and fragrance of the Vedas are entirely due to their revelling in the attributes of the Lord which alone glorify Him and make Him worthy of attainment. Desika does not belong to that system of thought which negates gunaas or attributes to the ultimate God-head. He is a God only because He is good; and all His goodness and good qualities depend upon the presence of Daya.

To those who contemplate on these features or gunas of the Lord, their mind gets ecstatic, and melt away in the excess of that ecstacy. That is referred to as the fourth and the last aspect that appeals to the sense-conquering persons (Dhantebhyaha). The Alwars and the Vaishnavite Acharyas have really got into raptures and rhapsodies when they think of the Lord's auspicious attributes—Kalyanagunas. Nammalwar the chief among them very often gets into a trance when he contemplates the Kalyana-gunas of the Lord. வல்வினையேனை ஈர்கின்ற குணங்கள் (gunas that simply captivate poor me) is how he speaks about them.

In this fourfold manner it is said in this sloka that the gunas of the Lord when closely associated with Daya are very sweet to contemplate,—*svadante* स्वदन्ते. They are eternally so—*nityam svadante* नित्यं स्वदुन्ते.

This is one of the several slokas in this Stotra which deal with the parama-tatparya परमतात्पर्यं (chief meaning) conveyed by it namely that Daya is the Empress among the Lord's severa gunas. Guneswari गुणेश्वरी (sloka 101 post).

जगज्जन्मस्थेमप्रलयरचनाकेलिरसिको
विमुक्त्यैकद्वारं विघटितकवाटं प्रणयिनाम् ।
इति त्वय्यायत्तं द्वितयमुपधीकृत्य करुणे
विशुद्धानां वाचां वृषशिखरिनाथः स्तुतिपदम् ॥ (६८)

Jagajjanmasthema pralaya rachanaakelirasiko
Vimuktyekadvaaram vighatitakavaatam pranayinaam ।
Iti tvayyaayattam dvitayam upadheekritya Karune !
Visuddhaanaam vaachaam Vrishasikharinaathas-stutipadam ॥ (68

Karuna Devi! The Lord of Vrishagiri is extolled (attains the state of being praised) by the very pure words (the Vedas) chiefly for two factors. One is that He derives pleasure (rasa) in the (eternal sport of creating this world, keeping it safe, and bringing about its laya or destruction. The other is that to His lovers (devotees) He is

Himself the open door and only entrance to Mukti. Both these are His, because of your bringing them about. (Thus the tributes that the Vedas pay to the Lord are really tributes paid to you).

One more sloka in this stotra where Daya is put above the Lord Himself. This sloka hints at—without saying so in so many words—the Lord shining in borrowed feathers.

If slokas 61 to 65 dealt with the banishment of *anishta* अनिष्ट to us, sloka 66 refers to the great ones like Brahma, Rudra and Indra, having their *anishta* dispelled and being able to enjoy position, pleasure and power, by Daya's kindness; sloka 67 refers to the high status attained by the Lord's gunas themselves by association with Daya. This sloka goes one step further and postulates that the Lord Himself owes His greatness to Daya Devi. No one can praise the high Lord as the Vedas have done. They extol Him in several places and in several ways; but on close scrutiny the Lord will be seen to be praised for His जगद्व्यापार Jagad-vyaapaara (cosmic evolution and involution) firstly, and secondly for His redemptive power, *i.e.*, releasing deserving souls from the bondage of being involved in that cosmic process for ever. Enough has been said in the earlier slokas calculated to demonstrate that Creation (sloka 17), sustenance (sloka 18) and even destruction (sloka 16) are all the work of Daya. So too is Moksha (sloka 20). In the fifth decad especially, it was demonstrated how Daya is the giver of Sreyas meaning mukti. So in this sloka it is stated that the Lord becomes the object of praise to the Srutis (Vedas) only because of the two-fold eminence attained by Him because of what Daya does.

The first line of this sloka is remnicient of two earlier classical works, one in Tamil, and one in Sanskrit. Kamban starts his Ramayana with the verse which talks of உலகம் யாவையும் தாம் உள ஆக்கலும், நிலை பெறுத்தலும், நீக்கலும் நீங்கலா அலகிலா விளையாட்டு,

The great Ramanuja starts his Sri Bhashya with

"Akila-bhuvana-janma-sthema-bhangaadi-leele"

"अखिल भुवन जन्म स्थेम भङ्गादि लीले"

The first line of this sloka of Desika translates the former and praphrases the latter of those two great sayings. The jagat-kaaranatva spoken about in all these is a Brahmalakshana ब्रह्मलक्षण or distinctive mark of Parabrahma परब्रह्म as shown by the second of the Brahma Sutras of Vyasa. So if that Jagatkaaranatva जगत्कारणत्व is made much of by the Vedas and the sutras, the credit really goes to Daya Devi who has been demonstrated to be chiefly responsible for all the factors that go to make that kaaranatva.

The words *Keli* केलि and *Rasikaha* रसिक: have been used to indicate that what the Lord does is not as a duty or under compulsion. It is all a *keli*, a sport. And the Lord takes great pleasure in indulging in this sport. Prompted by Daya and egged on by His own love of sport (leela) the Lord takes to creation etc.,—is the idea so nicely conveyed by the use of the two words *Keli* and *Rasikaha*.

The second paada of the sloka embellishes, and restates the sentiment mentioned in, the second paada of the sloka of Sri Bhashya referred to above. There the words are "Vinata-vividha-bhoota-vraata-rakshaika deekshe" विनतविविध भूतदुरातरक्षैकदीक्षे The form of the *Rakshana* or protection referred to there is indicated in this sloka by the word *Vimukhti* विमुक्ति. For *vinata* विनत, the word *pranayi* प्रणयि is substituted. The Lord never likes to think of prapannas as *saranaagataas*. He thinks of them as friends and lovers; not only He but Lakshmi too. For if He refers to Vibheeshana who had come to Him as a *saranaagata*, as one who had rightly and properly come to Him as a friend, mitra-bhaavena sampraaptam मित्रभावेन संप्राप्तं, Sita Devi desires to make Ravana Himself a friend; for does she not tell him मित्रमौपयिकं कर्तु रामं: and तेन मैत्री भवतु ते? Desika goes one step further and refers to the Prapanna as a pranayi प्रणयि—lover.

To such lovers the Lord is an open door to Moksha. The Siddhopayatva of the Lord is beautifully brought out here. The upanishadic text which says 'To him on whom His choice falls, He gives Himself up, and by him alone He is attained' is thought of here. He alone is the open door to Moksha; those who love Him are given free entrance at the door. Eka-dvaaram or only entrance is very significant. Whether one pursues the arduous path of Bhaktiyoga, or the equally difficult, but apparently more easy, path of Prapatti, the phala (fruit) *viz.*, Moksha is a gift of the Lord. It is not earned by one's own endeavour. All that man can do, and does, only earns for him the Prasaada प्रसाद or bounty of the Lord, and that Prasada takes the form of Sankalpa, or will, which alone confers Moksha.

Both the jagat-kaaranatva and the moksha-pradatva are the peculiar and exclusive province of Lord Srinivasa. No other god even shares either of them with the Lord, leave alone fully and wholly possessing the capacity for them. The Vedas praise the Lord very often with reference to these two qualities of His. He is a stutipada—object of praise to the Vedas, which are here referred to as Visuddhaanaam vaachaam—pure-worded. They do not talk out of ignorance or partiality. Their purity is supreme.

The above-mentioned two reasons for the Veda's praise are pointed out to be tvayyaayattam त्वय्यायत्तम् brought about by you, referring to Daya. Dvitayam द्वितयं the two of these.

कलिक्षोभोन्मीलत्क्षितिकलुषकूलंकषजवै-
रनुच्छेदैरेतैरवटतटवैषम्यरहितैः ।
प्रवाहैस्ते पद्मासहचरपरिष्कारिणि कृपे
विकल्पन्तेऽनल्पा वृषशिखरिणो निर्झरगणाः ॥ (६९)

Kalikshobhonmeelat-kshitikalusha koolankasha javaihi
anuchchedair-etair-avatatatavaishamyarahitaihi ।
Pravaahaiste Padmaasahacharaparishkaarini Kripe!
Vikalpante analpaa Vrishasikharino nirjharaganaaha ॥ (69)

Daya Devi (who is) an ornament to the Consort of Lakshmi! The entire group of these streams and waterfalls that are in plenty n the Tirumala Hill are comparable with your flow and flood ecause (1) They are also swift enough to (uproot) destroy the sins of human beings) that are ever on the increase because of the agitation nd perturbation brought about by the Kali age (2) they are also ncessant and never ceasing (3) they are also immense and (4) they re also capable of flowing without maintaining any distinction of igh and low.

Starting from the very first sloka which refers to the flow of Daya like sugar-cane juice, the slokas which deal with the flow and lood of Daya are very numerous. Slokas 60, 61 and 65 have ecapitulated that sentiment very pointedly. And here again n sloka 69 the flow of Daya is equated with the flow of the streams, alls, and cascades, in which TirumalaHill abounds. Already n sloka 31 it was stated that the vaari-dhaaraas of Vrishagiri prolaim Daya's flow. That idea is elaborated here by pointing out he points of resemblance between the stream of Daya and the treams on Tirumala.

The fastness of the current in each case is first enjoyed. (जवै:) Each is so fast that it is capable of uprooting *Kalusha* (dirt; uncleanliness) which is ever on the increase (unmeelat) owing to the play of Kali—the evil age. *Kshiti* means the earth. All the sins of the earth even as they begin to appear are washed away by the swift and powerful current of Daya. So too the streams flowing on the Hill wash away all the dirt as quickly as it gathers.

Koolankashaha; tearing away the bank. Both the streams are incessant, perennial, without break अनुच्छेदै:

And neither of them makes any difference between high and low. Daya levels up beings as pointed out in sloka 65. The Hill streams also bring down mountain crests and fill up low-lying tracts. They thus do not distinguish between low and high (अवट and तट) Avata is a pit, a cavity; tata is a mound, raised or at least level ground.

Both again are अनल्पा: by no means small or insignificant—meaning obviously very big and large. निर्झर Nirjhara is a mountain-torrent or waterfall. गणा: Ganaaha is groups. Some adopt the rendering gunaaha गुणा: meaning nature, characteristics. But ganaaha is the preferable paata for the sentiments voiced in the sloka.

Daya is addressed in this sloka as Padmaa-sahachara-parishkaarini. Parishkara means embellishing, adorning, acting as an ornament to. Here Daya Devi is said to embellish and adorn Padmaa-sahachara, or the Consort of Padma—(Lakshmi). Sahachara is one who goes with or accompanies another. Here the Lord is referred to as Padma-sahachara, and Daya is adorning such a One. Lord and Sri are mutual ornaments to each other. Daya is an ornament to the Two of them.

In sloka 66, the Lord was spoken of as an ornament to Vrishagiri. Here Daya is talked of as an ornament to Sree-nivasa (the Eternal Couple—Divya Dampatee).

Vikalpa is an alternative. *Vikalpante* means therefore "are said to be an equally effective and efficacious alternative." Reliance on Daya or a bath in the purifying streams of Tirumala Hill,—either is as efficacious as the other in relieving us of our sins.

The opening words of this sloka may be seen to emphasise the *anishtavidhvamsaseelatva* अनिष्टविध्वंशीलत्व of the Lord as well as of Daya, which is the topic dealt with by Desika in this decad of this Stotra.

खिलं चेतो वृत्तेः किमिदमिति विस्मेरभुवनं
कृपे सिंहक्ष्माभृत्कृतमुखचमत्कारकरणम् ।
भरन्यासच्छन्नप्रबलवृजिनप्राभृतभृतां
प्रतिप्रस्थानं ते श्रुतिनगरशृङ्गाटकजुषः ॥ (७०)

Khilam chetovritteh-kimidamiti vismerabhuvanam
Kripe! Simhakshmaabhrit-kritamukhachamatkaarakaranam ।
Bharanyaasachchannaprabala vrijina praabhrita bhritaam
pratiprasthaanam te Srutinagarasringatakajushaha ॥ (70)

Kripa Devi! Your coming forward and welcoming, at the cross-roads of the great city known as the Vedas, persons who bring as offerings to you their innumerable and mighty sins covered by a sheet called Saranagati, makes the entire world surprised at what it (the world) regards as an act brought about by a faulty intellect, and causes admiration even to that learned Vidwan who resides in the Simhaachala (another name for Tirumala).

The reactions of the men of the world and the reactions of Lord Srinivasa Himself to the great doings of Daya Devi that have been enjoyed in detail in this decad are dealt with in this closing sloka of the decad. The poet shows that he is not unaware of the several adverse criticisms of persons belonging to different schools of thought, about the nature and efficacy of prapatti. People are not wanting even to day, and even among Vaishnavaites, who pooh-pooh the system of prapatti, to establish which Desika has done so much in this stotra and elsewhere. Even most ardent and pious devotees find it difficult in their hearts to realise that the Grace of Srinivasa is so potent that their untold sins committed in previous births can be wiped out by that Grace, in answer to the observance of prapatti or Saranagati by an individual. They think more of their sins than of the qualities of the Lord. In several places in the course of his numerous works Desika has taken great pains to point out that if only people properly understood the essential nature of the Lord and of His Daya, they will never come to doubt the efficacy of prapatti as a means to all ends, and certainly as a means to that great and noble end, namely, Mukti, which all right-thinking men and women must hanker for. It is because this Mahaaviswasa महाविश्वास or undying faith in the potency of Prapatti is so difficult of attainment, Prapatti has been referred to as one maund of oil as compared to Bhaktiyoga which is a maund of gingelly.

The cheap gibe indulged in by critics is very beautifully described in the words किमिदं चेतोवृत्ते: खिलं? on the part of Daya.

The words भरन्यासच्छन्न......प्राभृतभृतां are calculated to recollect to us the carrying of bhog or naivedya to the Gods in temples which are taken from the Paakasala (cooking place) to the presence of the Deity covered over by a cloth. Praabhrta प्राभृत means a present or a gift, and is frequently used to denote an offering made to a deity or to a king. Here the naivedya or offering is nothing but sins—not mere sins, but prabala vrigina प्रबलवृजिन—mighty sins. They are covered over by a cloth known as Bharanyaasa or Saranaagati.

छन्न Chchanna means covered, concealed. That the analogy is very apt and appropriate can be seen if one reminds oneself of the 29th sloka in which the poet has spoken about Daya Devi's state of starvation for want of sufficient number of sins to appease her hunger. It was indicated in that sloka that the sins of the upaasakaas are, so to say, food to Daya Devi. The same analogy is employed here wherein the poet refers to the sins as being taken as offerings to Daya. (When we come to sloka 97 we will find the poet referring to this analogy once again). Just as a starving person who is told that numerous tasty victuals are being brought to him, will jump up from his place and rush up to meet the person who brings all that food, Daya Devi is here said to go ahead to receive and welcome those persons who bring to her that much-desired food, namely, sins. If this issuing out of Daya Devi and her welcoming are done secretly, there will be no opportunity for others to know about it or to cavil at it. As it is, she comes to where four cross roads meet. It is impossible to think of a place more open to the public than such a spot. The appropriateness of the poet's reference to a Sringaataka शृङ्गाटक—a place where four roads meet—must be appreciated by every rasika. The paths followed by the four classes of upaasakaas referred to by the Lord in the Geeta as आर्तः, जिज्ञासु, अर्थार्थी, ज्ञानि Aartha, Jignaasu, Arthaarthee and Gnaani are the four roads of the city of the Srutis which meet at this place, and Daya is said to present herself there. Desika has purposely called this a meeting of cross-roads in the city of Sruti, श्रुतिनगर. In this city of the Vedas there are people who have evolved several doctrines and theories. Before their very eyes here we find Daya Devi doing this daring act, namely, welcoming the sinner with avidity, just because that sinner has been clever enough to take to Bharanyaasa. The followers of other systems, which are also claimed to have been derived from the same Srutis, exclaim, " what foolishness this! "and " to what Khila खिल or vacuity of intellect is this to be attributed? "

Vismerabhuvanam विस्मेरभुवनं a world gaping with shock and surprise. Vismaya विस्मय may also refer to admiration, in which case the words will mean, to a world admiring Daya or Devi's cleverness. In view of the other words in the Sloka like Khilam, this latter meaning cannot be appropriate for this word as referring to the world. The poet is going to refer to the real admiration that the Lord entertains for this bold act of Daya. That is the other sentiment enshrined in the sloka.

Simhakshmaabhrit सिंहक्ष्माभृत् is Simhaachala one of the Puranic names of Tirumala. The Lord residing there is referred to here as a Kritamukha कृतमुख which means a very learned and clever person. The term विद्वान् Vidwan in a way will bring out the meaning of this word Kritamukha. The act of Daya related above in coming forward and meeting the prapannas at the cross-roads is looked upon by this very learned and clever Person with admiration. Only a Vidwan can adequately appreciate a Vidwan's work. As already pointed out there is a difference between the Vismaya of the world, and the Chamatkaara which is the reaction of the Lord to Daya's act. Here it is unalloyed admiration. What the Lord has not been able to achieve by Himself without the help of Daya, Daya has achieved before His very eyes; and His heart feels happy and glad at this welcome which Daya extends to Prapannas.

Prasthaana प्रस्थान means setting forth, starting; Pratiprasthaana प्रतिप्रस्थान has been understood as counterstarting or setting forth, meaning, going out for the purpose of welcoming those who come in.

This is the last sloka of this decad in which Daya Devi's supremacy in action has been very well described. Her daringness and audacity, in protecting those who have taken refuge in her, as dealt with in this decad are referred by Desika himself in the opening sloka of the next decad as a *Saahasa*, साहस a very rash and daring act. Desperate diseases call for desperate remedies. Daya has to have recourse to Saahasa to redeem us.

श्रीमते निगमान्तमहादेशिकाय नमः
श्री श्रीनिवास परब्रह्मणे नमः

॥ दयाशतकम् ॥

DAYAA SATAKAM

EIGHTH DECAD.

AFTER having sung about the glory of Daya in the previous seven decads, and shown to us how essential it is that we resort to Daya for helping us and saving us, Sri Vedanta Desika for the first time attempts to set out what it is that he has been praising all along. Daya is defined, and her true nature is set out only in this decad. The opening sloka of this eighth decad points out that Daya is Lord's *Ichcha* or desire. In the very next sloka it is stated that Daya has also got a form, and thereby it is shown that the poet has every justification to personify this quality or attribute, and sing a whole stotra in her praise. The swaroopa (essential nature) and the Roopa (form) of Daya are so dealt with that the central theme of Nammalwar's eighth *patthu* of Tiruvoimozhi almost seems to follow as corollary. That topic is Bhaktachchandaanuvarti (भक्तच्छन्दानुवर्ति) which means following the bent of mind or inclination of the devotee.

Harini (हरिणी) is the metre adopted for this decad. Both sikharini (7th decad) and harini denote high class women. Sikharini denotes an excellent (top-class) woman; harini is another name for *chitrinee* चित्रिणी which is as per Apte's definition the noun for a " woman endowed with various talents and excellences "; " one of the four divisions into which writers on erotic science class women." It is a matter for special study and research as to the reason why a particular metre is employed by great poets like Kalidasa and Vedanta Desika, and their ilk, for a particular topic. It is not a compliment to their genius or greatness to suggest that haphazardly they choose and adopt metres for their verses.

त्रिविधचिदचित्सत्तास्थेमप्रवृत्तिनियामिका
    वृषगिरिविभोरिच्छा सा त्वं परैरपराहता ।
कृपणभरभृत्किंकुर्वाणप्रभूतगुणान्तरा
    बहसि करुणे वैचक्षण्यं मदीक्षणसाहसे ॥ (७१)

Trividha chidachit sattaasthemapravrittiniyaamikaa
    Vrishagirivibhor ichchhaa saa tvam parairaparaahataa ।
Kripanabharabhritkimkurvaanaprabhootagunaantaraa
    vahasi Karune! vaichakshanyam madeekshanasaahase ॥ (71)

Devi Karuna! you who are but the wish or desire of the Lord of Vrishagiri; who order and direct the states of existence, continuance, and activity of the three kinds of chetanas and achetanas; who is uncontrolled by others; who willingly bear all the burdens of helpless and wretched beings; who are served (obeyed) by the other lofty qualities (of the Lord),—Such a you possess great skill in (are an adept at) the very bold act of patronising and protecting me by making me the object of your (protective) glances.

Daya is here defined as the Lord's Ichcha—desire or wish. The Lord's desire to protect—that is Daya. It is not an empty desire, nor is it a vain desire. This is demonstrated by reference to four factors.

The first of them is dealt with in a long phrase Tri-vida-chit-achit-satta-sthema-pravritti-niyaamikaa. Trivida is threefold. Trivida chit or the threefold chetana classification is as Nitya, Mukta and Baddha. (The ever celestials like Garuda; the released souls; and the souls in bondage.) Trivida achit refers to the three achetana objects known generally as prakriti, time and suddhasatva. The existence, continuance (persisting in the same state) and activity, of all the above six are Dayaadeena—*i.e.*, they are all ordered and ordained by her.

The second is parairaparaahata—uncontrollable, unobstructed by any one and anything else. Daya's sway is supreme. Nothing and nobody can stand in the way of the Lord's desire, whose name is Daya. It is the Ichcha, desire, of a Vibhu, a mighty and eminent sovereign and no one dare cross it.

Daya is next stated to be Kripana-bhara-bhrit, the bearer of the burdens of kripanaas, helpless beings. This has been dealt with and explained in several places before.

Kim-kurvaana-prabhoota-gunaantara-The kimkaratvam or service-rendering propensity of the other gunaas of the Lord is recapitualated to our minds once again. Those gunas are all prabhoota—mighty.

सा - त्वम् Saa-tvam—Such a you (Daya). This takes in all the excellences referred to above. Such a person as you—possessing all these essential qualities for protection have taken into your head to look at me (eekshana). For any one else it would have been a *saahasa*--a very rash act. But not so to you who possess all the above set out items of greatness. My protection is therefore assured.

वृषगिरिपतेर्हृद्या विश्वावतारसहायिनी
    क्षपितनिखिलावद्या देवि क्षमादिनिषेविता ।
भुवनजननी पुंसां भोगापवर्गविधायिनी
    बितमसि पदे व्यक्तिं नित्यां बिभर्षि दये स्वयम् ॥ (७२)

Vrishagiripater-hridayaa visvaavataara sahaayinee
    kshapitanikhilaavadyaa Devi! kshamaadinishevitaa ।
Bhuvanajananee pumsam bhogaapavargavidhaayinee
    vitamasi pade vyaktim nityaam bibharshi Daye! svayam ॥ (72)

Devi! Daya! you are very dear to the Lord of Vrishagiri; you assist the Lord in all His avataaras; you dispel all sins and imperfections; you are served by kshama and others; you are the mother of the universe; you bestow on human beings pleasure and bliss; you by yourself take an eternal form (vigraha) of your own in Paramapada.

Having dwelt with the swaroopa of Daya in the the previous verse, the poet deals with her *roopa* or form in this. And this he does by showing to us in his inimitable way that Lakshmi is really Daya incarnate. *Sleshaalankaara* is handled with very great effect once again. Six points of identity are mentioned. We shall enjoy the beauties of the slesha in this sloka one by one.

1. Vrishagiripater-hridyaa:

Daya takes its origin form the heart of the Lord of Vrishagiri (hridya). The Lord is very fond of Daya and likes her better than all His other qualities.

Lakshmi is very dear to the heart of the Lord. In fact she resides in His chest, the seat of the heart.

2. Visvaavataara sahaayinee:

Daya is of great service and aid in all the avatars that the Lord undertakes, assumes. This has been dealt with in Sloka 35 already, and will be elaborated later in sloka 82.

Lakshmi follows the Lord in all His avataars, and is in fact indispensable for the achievement of the purpose of each avataar. As the Vishnupurana has put it, if He comes as Rama she comes as Seeta; if He becomes Krishna, She becomes Rukmini, and so on in all avatars. This idea has been very nicely enjoyed by Desika in Sloka No. 10 of Sri Stuti (where She is referred to as a Priya Sahachari during avatars), and in the latter half of the 1st sloka of Dasavatara Stotra.

3. Kshapitanikhilaavadyaa

Daya is a dispeller of all sins, faults and imperfections in her votaries. This idea has been enjoyed in extenso in several preceding slokas.

Lakshmi's one great purpose is to drive away evil and sin. " வேரிமாறாத பூமேல் இருப்பாள் வினைதீர்க்குமே' (Nammalwar) 'मङ्गलं मङ्गलानां. She is mangalam mangalaanaam; and the pure and wise people resort to Her for getting cleansed of their sins and avidya:

दूरीकर्तुं दुरितनिवहं त्यक्तुमाद्यामविद्याम् ।

Dooreekartum-duritanivaham-tyaktum-aadyam-avidyaam.

4. Kshamaadinishevita

Daya is subserved by qualities like forbearance. It was stated as early as the 7th sloka ante that Kshama or forbearance (பொறுமை) is of great help in removing the obstacles in the way of the free flow of Daya. Koorattalwan sings of " Dayaakshanti-oudaarya......... " and thereby shows to us how shaanti or kshama and a host of other qualities really form the retinue of Daya.

Lakshmi being the Patta-Mahishi (பட்டமஹிஷி) or Chief Consort of the Lord, all other consorts like Bhoomidevi, Neela-Devi etc., wait on Her as Her maids. Kshama is the name for Bhoomi (world).

5. Bhuvanajananee

Daya as the chief factor responsible for creation is rightly, referred to as the mother of the universe.

Lakshmi is Samasta-jananee (sloka 6). If the Lord is the Father of the world, She is the Mother.

6. pumsam-bhogaapavargavidhaayinee

Daya's capacity to confer all the earthly pleasures and also the bliss of moksha on her votaries and followers has been dealt with in great detail before. That is concisely recapitulated here by the expression pumsaam-bhoga-apavarga-vidhaayinee, Conferrer of bhoga (earthly pleasures) and apavarga (mokshananda) on human beings. In fact in the very first sloka (10) about Daya in this stotra, it was said " sootim-apavarga-trivargayoho "

Lakshmi similarly is the conferrer of bhoga and apavarga. Lakshmi-kataaksha as every one knows brings wealth, happiness and comfort in its wake. And in the redemption of souls and giving them a place in Paramapada, She is along with the Lord the sole authority and power. So She too is a bhoga-apavarga-vidhayinee. Alavandar has enjoyed this greatness of Sri or Lakshmi in his Chatussloki, and following him, Alwan, Bhattar, and Desika have elaborated it in their works.

The sloka winds up by stating that Daya manifests herself with a Vigraha (vyakti) or form of her own accord—Vyaktim swayam bibharshi. This is a nice way of referring to Daya also as a Swayam vyakta, even like Lord Srinivasa (sloka 9).

The words *vitamasi* and *pade*, or, if they are to be taken together as a compound word, *vitamasipade*, appear rather unintelligible to us here. Vitamasipadam is Vaikunta—the place devoid of tamas (darkness and ignorance). To say that Daya manifests herself with a vigraha or form only in Vaikunta could not have been intended by the poet. Vitamasi-pade may be taken to mean in places or spots where there is no tamas. It is only in such places that Daya's form is felt and experienced as a fact. Elsewhere and to people who are blinded by tamas, she is not, and she will have no form either.

This sloka can be seen to be an elaboration of the 6th sloka of this stotra. This is the Dhyana-sloka for Daya Devi. Note the two vocatives in this sloka. Devi! and Daye! The sloka is probably addressed to Lakshmi as well as to Daya. The interchangeableness is indicated by the trick of using two vocatives.

स्वयमुदयिनः सिद्धाद्याविष्कृताश्च शुभालया
विविधविभवव्यूहावासाः परं च पदं विभोः ।
वृषगिरिमुखेष्वेतेष्विच्छावधिप्रतिलब्धये
दृढविनिहिता निश्रेणिस्त्वं दये निजपर्वभिः ॥ (७३)

Svayam udayinas-siddhaayaavishkritaascha subhaalayaa
vividha vibhavavyoohaavaasaaha param cha padam vibhoho ।
Vrishagirimukheshveteshvichchaavadhipratilabdhaye
dridhavinihitaa nissrenistvam Daye! nijaparvabhihi ॥ (73)

Daya Devi! For people to attain in full their heart's desires, at spots (or places) of which Vrishagiri is foremost, such as (1) auspicious temples (where the Lord manifests himself in Archa form) including Swayam Vyakta stalas and stalas discovered by siddhas etc. (2) the varied and various vibhavavataara forms (3) vyuha forms (4) haarda or antaryami forms and (5) even that transcendent Paramapada, where-all the Lord resides, you stand like a strong and sturdy ladder, having several rungs and levels of your own for their help and aid.

In this sloka Desika has mentioned the Pancha-roopas or the five forms that the Lord assumes as postulated by the Pancharatras and enjoyed by the Alwars. He has given the pride of place amongst them all to the Moorthy or form of Lord Srinivasa. Note Vrishagiri-mukheshu-etheshu. वृषगिरिमुखेष्वेतेषु These headed by Vrishagiri or Tirumala. It is usual with several devotees of Lord Srinivasa to rank Tirumala as the first and foremost among all temples. But here we see Desika definitely ranking this Divya Desa as the first and foremost among all the fivefold spots where the Lord manifests Himself in His five forms.

(1) He starts with the *Subhaalayaas*, auspicious temples, where the Lord resides in His archa form. These temples are classified as Swayamvyaktha, Saiddha, Daiva, Arsha, and Maanusha. In the first of them the manifestation is made on His own initiative, while Saiddha, Daiva and Arsha are spots where He has disclosed Himself in answer to a prayer or request from a Siddha, Deva or Rishi respectively. Maanusha refers to spots consecrated by

man by inviting the Lord according to the Agamas to come and dwell in a particular vigraha chosen by him. The use of the word 'aadi' after the word Siddha is intended to take in the other classifications. Siddhadi—Siddha etc.

Next are clubbed the Vibhava, Vyuha and Haarda forms. The word *Vivida* meaning several, diverse, precedes them all. The various Vibhava forms, Vyuha forms and aavaasa forms. Vibhava roopa is the form taken on by the Lord when He came into the world as Rama, Krishna etc. This manifestation is enjoyed in extenso in the next and ninth decad of this stotra.

Vyuha forms are mainly fourfold—Vasudeva, Sankarshana Pradyumna and Aniruddha forms. Vyuha also takes in their elaborations into the twelve forms of Kesava, Narayana, Madhava etc.—Dwadasa nama forms. They are all adopted by the Lord for the edification of those devotees who like to revel in Dhyana or unruffled contemplation of the Lord.

Aavasa आवास is the word that follows next. This word literally means a house, a habitation, an abode. In this context, this word must be taken to indicate the residence in the human heart in the form of an *antaryami*. As the four other forms are mentioned by name, and as this word is a general word capable of giving this particular meaning also, we must understand it as a reference to the antaryami form. It has been taken by some commentators as being qualified by the two words preceding it *viz*., Vibhava and Vyuha. It is better to interpret it as the abode in the heart.

Paramapada comes last in the enumeration and it has a च attached to it. परं च पदं *Even* that transcendental spot.

The Etheshu एतेषु meaning all these is governed by Vrishagiri mukheshu. These headed by, or led by, Vrishagiri. That is the importance and glory that Desika sees in Tirumala.

It is in these several spots that the upaasaka or aspirant has to obtain his heart's desire (Ichchavadhi) and Daya helps him to seek out those several spots, or such of them as are desired. And with that end in view she stands like a ladder or staircase (निश्रेणि) in front of the aspirant. A ladder has got joints or rungs. A staircase has steps. पर्वं refers to a joint or step. By her steps or stages, Daya helps the aspirants at all levels. The *nissreni* is *dridha-vinihita*—stoutly and strongly tied together. All the steps are so tightly strung together that it does not matter which step or rung one is on. It is a single ladder. Dhrida-vinihita may also be taken to mean safely and securely placed. This ladder will not slip while one is using it, and there is no chance for a crash.

A ladder or a staircase is as useful for ascending as for descending. Desika has very naively described Daya as a ladder here, so that it may be understood that Daya is the agency through which man may ascend to God, and at the same time that God may use to descend into man. For, but for Daya how can man aspire to rise aloft into the ethereal heights of spiritual enjoyments ? And but for Daya where is the chance of the Almighty descending to the level of man to console and comfort him and ultimately save him? Like all Desika's upamaas or comparisons this also has appropriateness and at the same time sweetness and sublimity.

हितमिति जगद्दृष्ट्या क्लृप्तैरक्लृप्तफलान्तरै-
रमतिविहितैरन्यैर्धर्मायितैश्च यदृच्छया ।
परिणतबहुच्छद्मा पद्मासहायदये स्वयं
प्रदिशसि निजाभिप्रेतं नः प्रशाम्यदपत्रपा ॥ (७४)

Hitam iti jagadhrishtyaa kliptair-akliptaphalaantarair
amativihitair-anyair-dharmaayitaischa yadrchchayaa ।
Parinatabahuchchhadmaa Padmaasahaaya Daye! swayam
pradisasi nijaabhipretam naha prasaamyadapatrapaa ॥ (74)

Daya of Padmaasahaaya! By various devices and pretexts, unabashed,—you find some good in us under various heads such as (1) acts done which are recognised by the world as proper and meritorious acts (2) acts done without any idea about the fruits prescribed therefor (3) good acts done without any intention or desire to do any good (4) casual and accidental good deeds committed by us and (5) similar other acts of ours, and on the strength of such deeds you bestow on us what in your opinion you think is fit and good for us.

The extent of our desire Ichchaavadhi was mentioned in the previous sloka as what determines the extent and content of our realisation. All the four Purusharthas or whichever out of them is desired by us, Daya procures the same to us. How does she bring about such a state of affairs? We all have desire to obtain this and obtain that, but we do not take any steps to do the needful by observing the proper upaaya or means. How can Daya get us those benefits which we have not qualified ourselves for? The answer to that question is furnished by this sloka.

Daya is an adept at finding pretexts and inventing ways and means to confer benefits on us. If a person in power takes kindly to us, he says he has seen some good in us and rewards us for it. It may be we really did something good, or it may be that out of his good feelings towards us, he has put a kindly interpretation on some unwitting act of ours. Daya is likened to such a person in this sloka.

After all she is the Daya of the Lord of this universe. He cannot afford to be capricious: He cannot and ought not to be partial. He is also the law-giver and He has to enforce the laws promulgated by Himself. He has to reward the virtuous and punish the wicked. If we are virtuous it is all right; we easily get rewarded. But we are not virtuous; we are wicked by temperament and propensity. Yet we desire only benefits, and are afraid of getting punished. After ages and ages of indifference to the Lord and His Daya, we have now come to realise that our safety and future salvation lie in Their hands alone. We unreservedly surrender ourselves to Them. But before the Lord protects us, He will desire to be satisfied that we have done some good deeds and therefore deserve sympathetic and kindly treatment. It is here Daya Devi steps in, and very dexterously discovers some good in us. *Chchadma* छद्म is a pretext, a guise, Parinata-bahu-chchadma means 'of various and diverse pretexts.' What are they? The poet refers to four of them specifically and adds one generically.

Sukrita सुकृत is of several kinds. The first of them is Praasangika Sukrita प्रासंगिक सुकृत--good deeds which according to the world's standards are calculated for the welfare (hita) of the soul (*e,g.,*) building temples, erecting tanks for public use etc. This is referred to here as Hitam-iti-jagad-drishtya-kliptaihi,-done as what the world regards as calculated to promote the welfare of the doer.

The next is known as aanushangika sukrita---आनुषंगिक सुकृत While doing a good act with a particular purpose or for a particular end, it so happens that a secondary and unthought of good deed comes to be performed. You feed a hungry man: with the food you provide, he feeds his wife and child, whom you never thought of while giving the food to the man whose hunger you wanted to appease. This unthought of good is a by-product of an intended good. This is spoken of as aklipta-phalaantaraihi—अक्लृप्त फलान्तरैः unthought of other object.

The third is abuddhipoorvakasukrita—अबुद्धिपूर्वक सुकृत some good which simply occurs without one's knowledge or volition. While going to attend a conference in Benares a person happens to die on the banks of the Ganges. He would never have bargained for it. This is amati-vihitaihi अमतिविहितैः done without an idea or thought of one's own.

The next is yaadrichchika sukrita—यादृच्छिक सुकृत casual or accidental. You go pursuing your cow which has run away from your cowshed. It goes round a temple and in following it you perform a pradakshina of that temple. Or, while fishing in the sea you fall into it by accident on the sacred Mahodaya day. This is dharmaitihi-yadrchchayaa.

In addition to the above four, Desika has added anyaihi अन्यैः others as well. They may take in consciously done good acts—Saamaanya-buddhi-moola-Sukrita, which in some cases earn great merit. You invite a friend whom you have not seen for years and give him food and lodging for some days. He happens to be a Sadhu. You have really done a very meritorious thing by giving him food and shelter though you did so only in the view that he was an old time friend.

Daya Devi thus looks into all our acts and doings with a magnifying glass, and catching hold of some small unthinking act of ours, construes the same in one of the above modes, as a very lofty and meritorious act, and recommends to the Lord for our reprieve and redemption. Thereby she confers on us what she thinks is good for us. Nijaabhipretam—naha pradisasi—निजाभिप्रेतं नः प्रदिशसि you give what in your view is best for us. Or you give what in our opinion is desirable. Nija may be taken as referring to Daya or to us नः in the sloka.

In this Daya evidently shows herself rather निरपत्रपा shameless. Banishing bashfulness and shame she has to work like this to bring about our welfare. In sloka 71 it was Saahasa साहस. Here it is shamelessness on the part of Daya. To multiply our small good deeds, to magnify them and to show them off to our best advantage, even where we never dreamt of doing any small good, requires a lot of courage, resourcefulness and dash: Daya has them all. Is she not Padmasahayakaruna? the Karuna of the Consort of Padma? Lakshmi's ways are copied by Daya. Who but a Sita could find good in the demons that threatened and frightened her day in and day out, and plead for their protection at the hands of the mighty Hanuman, who wanted to crush them and avenge their cruelty towards Jagan-mata? Contact with Lakshmi has secured for Daya that selfsame characteristic of finding, nay discovering, good where it is not, or at least latent, and rewarding that good.

अतिविधिशिवैरैश्वर्यात्मानुभूतिरसैर्जना-
नहृदयमिहोपच्छन्द्यैषामसङ्गदशार्थिनी ।
तृषितजनतातीर्थस्नानक्रमक्षपितैनसां
वितरसि दये वीतातङ्का वृषाद्रिपतेः पदम् ॥ (७५)

Atividhi Sivair-aisvairyaatmaanubhootirasair-janaan
ahridayam ihopachchandyaishaam asangadasaarthinee ।
Trishitajanataateerthasnaanakramakshapitainasaam
vitarasi Dayeveetaatankaa Vrishaadripateh-padam ॥ (75)

Daya Devi, in regard to people in this world who prefer the pleasures of aiswarya and kaivalya ऐश्वर्य and कैवल्य as even superior to those of the status of Brahma and Siva, you (secretly) desiring them to get unconnected with such desires, (externally) appear to confer on them those pleasures, in order to please them and thereby annex them unto yourself, so that, ultimately you may completely and fearlessly confer on them the pleasure of attaining the Feet of Lord Srinivasa, the Lord of Vrishaadri, even like asking a person to bathe in the ganges in order to get rid of his thirst, all the while desiring to secure for him the fuller benefits of Ganga-snana capable of depriving him of his sins.

The words *nijaabhipretam Pradisasi* employed in the previous sloka are elaborated openly in this sloka. Those words were employed in the previous sloka in a dubious way to suggest the true desire of the aspirant, as also of Daya. But that Daya really works to realise her own ideas of the welfare of the upaasaka, this sloka points out in a very clear manner. Incidentally it gives out the idea contained in the term Bhakta-chchandaanuvarti which is the topic of this decad.

The people of this world prefer aiswarya, wealth, to all other things. Aiswarya here must be taken to be a compendious term indicating all worldly pleasures. The kaivalya which comes next is the stage where the aspirant to spiritual eminence indulges in the realisation of the pleasures of the self, bereft of God-association. To the true devotee of God, even kaivalya is not a stage worth aspiring for. It is as good, or as bad, and certainly as evanescent and unsatisfying, as aiswarya itself. The opening words of the sloka show that people who are spiritually minded prefer the pleasures of wealth and Aatmanubhava even to the exalted positions held by Brahma and Rudra. It shows that people are so taken in by what this world can offer that they do not even desire the other-worldly pleasures like those of Brahma and Rudra.

Daya Devi understands correctly the desire of the people of the world to obtain earthly wealth, or in a few and rare cases the supreme satisfaction of Aathmanubhava आत्मानुभव. Personally Daya Devi, who knows the real value to be attached to these, as contrasted with the pleasures attainable at the Feet of the Lord, is not happy about the craving that people entertain for these pleasures. But just like a fond mother, who pretends to satisfy the expressed desires of the child, all the while having in her mind the idea of converting it later on to her views. Daya appears to grant what they want, so that her hold on them may become firm and they may learn to look to her for everything they desire to have. The Illustration about conferring punya and dispelling sin on an individual who does not desire punya or to get rid of his sin, but only feels thirsty, shows the way Daya Devi sets about it. Just as a person interested in a thirsty man's soul takes him to the sacred theerthas like the Ganga, and asks that person to quench his thirst with the water of the Ganga, so that he may not only have his thirst quenched but also obtain punya, so too Daya Devi eggs on her votaries to appeal to her (and thereby to the Lord) to secure their hearts' desire with the idea of ultimately making them desire the Lord for the Lord's own sake. It is Daya's attempt to convert he first three classes of men denoted by Lord Sri Krishna as Aartha ार्थ: Jignasu जिज्ञासु and Artharthi अर्थार्थी into persons belonging o the last class namely gnani ज्ञानि.

The word 'veetaatanka,' which literally means having dispelled ear, shows how carefully Daya Devi sets about the task of redeeming us and taking us to eternal bliss, mokshananda. She has to work very cleverly, and should avoid the blame that is likely to attach to her in the shape of Vaishamya or partiality. If she bestows her favours on some persons to the exclusion of others, people will attribute partiality to her. That is why she is very careful to discover some good as set out in the previous sloka. Desika has very nicely described this in a sloka of his in Sankalpasooryodhaya, where he refers to the Lord protecting us by finding some casual good in us, however unintended it might be:

घुणक्षितिलिपिक्रमात् उपनिपातिनःपातिनः ।

घुण Ghuna is a particular insect found in timber etc. Ghunakshiti घुणक्षिति—therefore means the incision in wood, or the leaf of a book, made by the insect or worm, and resembling somewhat the form of a letter. There is a nyaya known as घुणाक्षरन्याय which therefore has come to denote any fortuitous or chance occurence. The Lord (that is Daya Devi) thus snatches upon some occurence in us, and makes us the recipients of benefits and rewards.

Asangadasaarthinee is another very important expression in this sloka. While conferring upon us the pleasures of earth as desired by us, Daya Devi is desirous of our coming to disregard and reject those pleasures, and therefore she is praying for our dissociation—asanga असङ्ग—from them. At the same time in order not to lose hold upon us, and to work our welfare and to secure to us the lasting good that is in her gift, she appears to satisfy our cravings only with a view ultimately to take us to the Feet of the Lord. The child refuses to take good food, and insists upon enjoying a bite at a very unhealthy and indigestible stuff. The mother does not snatch away that stuff immediately, but permits the child to have a go at it, and it is only by stages that she weans the child from that desire and makes it take to wholesome food Daya Devi, Mother that she is to all of us, works on the same lines and ensures that we safely reach the destination, namely, the Fee of the Lord of Vrishaadri वृषात्रिपतेः पदं.

वृषगिरिसुधासिन्धौ जन्तुर्दये निहितस्त्वया
भवभयपरीतापच्छित्त्यै भजन्नघमर्षणम् ।
मुषितकलुषो मुक्तेरग्रेसरैरभिपूर्यते
स्वयमुपनतैः स्वात्मानन्दप्रभृत्यनुबन्धिभिः ॥ (७६)

Vishagirisudhaasindhau jantur-Daye! nihitas-tvayaa
bhavabhaya pareetaapachchhittyai bhajannaghamarshanam ।
Mushitakalusho mukter-agresarair-abhipooryate
svayam upanatais-svaatmaanandaprabhrityanubandhibhihi ॥ (76)

Daya Devi! That being who is placed by you in that ocean of nectar that is in Vrishagiri, gets his fear and tapa (heat) engendered by samsara, dispelled, and becomes pure and freed from sin. Having thus got himself cleansed of sin, he is filled, during his further stay in this world, with all the higher pleasures, like those obtained from a true realisation of one's own self,—pleasures which are really fore-runners and fore-tastes of the mokshananda that is sure to come.

Aghamarshana अघमर्षण is a bath enjoined by the Scriptures and Dharmasastras for cleansing oneself of very heinous sins and crimes. There is a *sookta* सूक्त or prayer in the Rig Veda, known as the Aghamarshana Sookta, which, if repeated while bathing, has got the power of releasing the bather from heinous sins. The reference in this sloka is to that purifying and expiatory bath.

Daya is here referred to as placing (निहितस्त्वया) her upaasakas in that grand and sweet nectar-sea, that is Srinivasa. This is the bath she enjoins on her votaries, or rather gets them to go through. It is clear that Desika is here thinking of the old saying " Esha-Brahma-pravishtosmi-greeshme-seetam-iva-hridam" एषब्रह्मप्रविष्टोऽस्मि ग्रीष्मेशीतमिवहृदम्. I plunge myself into this Brahman, like plunging into a cool and deep lake, during scorching summer. In the Devanayaka Panchasat (a stotra in praise of the Lord of Tiruvahindrapuram in South Arcot District) Desika has made this reference more plain and pointed:

या मोहिता विविधभोगमरीचिकाभिः विश्रान्तिमद्यलभते विबुधैकनाथ ।
गम्भीरपुण्यमधुरं मम धीर्भवन्तं ग्रीष्मेतटाकमिव शीतमनुप्रविष्टा ॥

(Lord Devanatha! Having been ruthlessly duped by several kinds of mirage in the shape of earthly pleasures, my mind has just now attained rest, peace and comfort; for it has entered into (plunged into the depths of) You, who are like a majestic, sacred, and sweet lake (full of water),—even as one scorched gets into a tank).

It was only a *tataaka* तटाक or tank in Devanayaka Panchasat. Here it is an ocean, Sindhu,—an ocean of nectar, Sudha-sindhu. (Please refer also to Sloka 43 above). Pleasurability apart, the capacity to purify is the key-note of this sloka. The *sookta* here obviously is Saranagati mantra. That is the Aghamarshana Sookta. The plunge into Lord Srinivasa with the utterance of Saranagatimantra is the bath or plunge talked of here.

Like children who are afraid to get into water for bathing, we are reluctant to take to this bath, however pleasant, purificatory, and beneficial, it may be. So, Daya Devi---the fond parent that she is—desiring that we should not miss all that, puts us into—literally throws us into—that nectar-ocean. This is indicated by the "nihitastvayaa." Here Daya Devi does what her other ego, Goda Devi, has done for us in her classical Tiruppavai,--taking us for that bath along with her and making us bathe. நீராடப் போதுவீர் ! போதுமினோ.

A bath usually cools and also purifies the body and spirit. But here not only are tapa or heat, and papa or sin, dispelled, but Bhaya भय or fear is also dispelled. The fear complex that has been with us by age-long contact with evil, completely disappears. That is shown by the expression Bhava-bhaya-chchittyai. भवभयच्छित्यै.

Release from sin of all sorts, and the cleansed state of the soul, are indicated by the term mushita-kalusha. *Kalusham* कलुषं means dirt, filth, mud, as also sin. Mushita literally means taken away, carried off. By contact with the Lord, in the aghamarshana way, our sins are forcibly taken away from us, sins from whom we have been reluctant to part, all these ages.

As a result of this bath in the Lord, several exilarating pleasures follow, or come of their own accord. They are preludes or forerunners to that great Mokshananda. The upasaka who has thrown himself and plunged into Para Brahmam is filled with several such pleasures. Only one of them is mentioned here "Svaatmaananda" स्वात्मानन्द. The pleasure born out of the true understanding of one's own self as a prakara, or mode, or sesha, of Lord Srinivasa. *Svaatma*, or one's own atma, in Visishtadvaita connotes Parabrahmam, who is the soul or atma of the entire world,—sentient and non-sentient. So Svaatmaananda means the pleasures of daasya दास्य or kainkarya. Contrast this word *Svaatmananda* with the *aatmmanubhooti* of the previous sloka. There, it was the contemplation of the *kevala atma* bereft of divine content. It was kaivalya there, but not here.

By the word Prabriti etc., we have to understand Satsangha (association with Sudhdhaanta siddhantins) Archa-anubhava (enjoyment of the beauty and grace of the Gods in Temples) and similar faultless and elevating pleasures that make life itself worth living.

अनितरजुषामन्तर्मूलेऽप्यपायपरिप्लवे
कृतविदनघा विच्छिद्यैषां कृपे यमवश्यताम् ।
प्रपदनफलप्रत्यादेशप्रसङ्गविवर्जितं
प्रतिविधिमुपाधत्से सार्धं वृषाद्रिहितैषिणा ॥ (७७)

Anitarajushaaṁ antar-moolepyapaayapariplave
kritavidanaghaa vichchidyaishaam Kripe! Yamavasyataam ।
Prapadanaphalapratyaadesa prasangavivarjitam
pratividhim upaadhatse saardham Vrishaadri-hitaishinaa ॥ (77)

Kripa Devi! Even if those who steadfastly look up to the Lord and the Lord alone, as their upaya and purushartha, (means and end), happen to commit any conscious sin, you who never allow yourself to forget the saranagati that they have done, and who have not in your make up the fault of punishing,—to them, you in conjunction with that great Well-wisher of all mankind in Vrishadri, bring about a counter-acting element, so that there is no impediment or bar to their attaining the fruit of the Saranagati that they have observed.

The cleansing process was the topic of the previous sloka. As the Prapanna continues to live even after performing Saranagati, his further life is decided according to the *praarabdha* or that part of his karmas which has begun to give effect. Therefore his future acts of commission and omission are likely to lead him into sin. It is here pointed out, that because prapatti is made with the determination to follow the Lord's commands, and never to do any act proscribed by the Sastras, which contain His orders and ordinances, it is not likely that the *prapanna* will ever be guilty of conscious commissions and omissions in the nature of sin. But by the force of the *prarabdha*, if the prapanna happens to be unwittingly guilty of an act of commission or omission, which will be an *apaaya* or sin, what will happen to him? This is the problem which which will present itself to every thinking man. If after doing Prapatti, I go wrong, will I lose the benefit of the prapatti performed by me, is the question that is likely to assail every prapanna. The answer to that is furnished by this sloka. The sloka assures us that Daya Devi who is not likely to forget the saranagati that we have done, and who has not in her composition the fault of punishing others, will see to it that the evil results that must follow as a result of our wrong acts after prapatti are warded off in some manner or another. The methods of warding off the evil effects are, by making us undergo expiation or prayaschitta for the sins that we shall unconsciously or unwittingly commit after the performance of prapatti, or if our nature does not permit us to take to such expiation, then Daya Devi sees to it that some punishment is awarded for that error or slip from the path of virtue, so that by being punished for it, the sin itself disappears. For the prapatti performed, the Lord has at the behest of Daya Devi promised to the prapanna complete freedom from the cycle of births and deaths at the end of this particular life. No change is effected in that sankalpa or resolution of the Lord, taken with the help of Daya Devi. The Lord through Daya Devi sees to it that the sins committed in the post-prapatti period are not allowed to stand in the way of conferring mukti or release on the prapanna. This is achieved by Daya Devi counteracting the errors of commission and omission that may set in in the post-prapatti period. The word "pratividhim" shows the counter-action. Elsewhere Desika has elaborated this idea and said as follows referring to the Buddhipoorva-paapa

धीपूर्वोत्तरपाप्मनां अजननात् जातेपि तन्निष्कृतेः
कौटल्ये सति शिक्षयाप्यनघयन् क्रीडीकरोति प्रभुः

or conscious sins Conscious errors of commission and omission will not occur. Even if they occur, by prayaschitta निष्कृति, or by punishment, the Lord sees to it that His original sankalpa of mukthi is carried out. The prior sins are all wiped out by the nyaasa or saranagati. The portion of the prarabdha which has to be gone through till the end of this lifetime is suffered, and thereby liquidated. Conscious post-prapatti sins will not occur, and if they occur they are destroyed by expiation or punishment. The result is there is no balance of karma left at the moment of the prapanna's casting off this body of his. This process is dealt with in this sloka which emphasises the absence of the danger of once again getting into the clutches of the god of death (yamavasyataam. यमवश्यताम्). Daya Devi casts asunder that great danger, and in conjunction with that *hitaishinee* or benefit-Conferrer, Lord Srinivasa, does away with all the obstacles in the way of conferring moksha upon the prapanna.

क्षणविलयिनां शास्त्रार्थानां फलाय निवेशिते
    सुरपितृगणे निर्वेशात्प्रागपि प्रलयं गते ।
अधिगतवृषक्ष्माभृन्नाथामकालवशंवदां
    प्रतिभुवमिह व्याचख्युस्त्वां कृपे निरुपप्लवाम् ॥ (७८)

Kshanavilayinaam saastraarthaanaam phalaayanivesite
    Sura Pitirigane nirvesat praagapi pralayam gate ।
Adhigata Vrishakshmaabrinnaathaam akaalavasamvadaam
    pratibhuvam iha vyaachkhyustvaam Kripe! nirupaplavaam ॥ (78)

Daya Devi! where the Devas and Pitrus who have been appoinced to confer fruits for the performance of good deeds prescribed in the Saastras (such as daanaas and homaas), fruits which are of very short duration, when those gods and pirtrus themselves reach the end of their career and disappear, you who are not subject to any limitations of time, you who are unaffected by the troubles that others may create, and you who have Lord Srinivasa for your support, stand guarantee for the realisation of the phala by those persons who have done those good deeds. So the great ones have said.

Deeds that human beings perform can be good deeds or bad deeds. It would have been noticed that only bad deeds, which are called sins, have very often come up for consideration. Just as sins have to receive punishment, good and virtuous deeds have got to receive their rewards. The perpetrator of sins will be anxious to avoid having to undergo the punishment due for those sins. Similarly those who have performed good and righteous deeds will be anxious to have the reward prescribed for those deeds bestowed on them. This sloka deals with the doers of good deeds, and assures them that if they are anxious and desirous of obtaining all the benefits and rewards that they are entitled to by virtue of their good acts, they need not be afraid of having to lose them because the minor gods and the *Pitrus*, who, propitiated by these good deeds, have to give to them those rewards, disappear before that date. The rewards themselves are impermanent. It may also so happen that before the time arrives for rewarding those persons who eagerly wait their for their rewards, the Devas and Pitrus may themselves disappear, because the good deeds responsible for getting them their high position have come to an end. Daya Devi however sees to it that no disappointment is caused to those who have by their good acts earned those rewards and preferments. It is said in this sloka that she stands as a surety and a guarantee to them for the realisation of all the benefits and rewards.

The Vedas, in the Karmakanda portion thereof, have prescribed several deeds and actions by which men can propitiate a particular *devata* or a particular forefather (pitru). The Devatas or Devas, such as Indra etc., have attained the position of power and importance by virtue of their good deeds. Any act done in order to please them results in good things to the person doing the acts. One who desires to go to Swarga has been ordained to do a particular yaga. When there is no rain, Indra or Varuna has been directed to be propitiated by suitable mantras and observances, and when these observances are gone through, rain comes, and so on. If a Deva so propitiated ceases to be a Deva by the time the good deeds done to propitiate him begin to earn fruit, what is to happen to those deeds? This uncertainty in the persons here down below will act as a deterrent to their taking to a good act with the motive of obtaining good results. To protect the sanctity and greatness of the sastras which have laid down particular deeds, and the rewards to be obtained therefor by or through the agency of certain minor gods, Daya Devi functions as a surety ensuring the reward. She is not liabile to any destruction. She is an *akaalavasamvada*, not subject to the operation of time. She is also nir-upaplava, obstruction-less. Above all Daya Devi has annexed herself to Lord Srinivasa, the Lord of Venkatadri who is above all limitations of time and space.

Pratibhoo (प्रतिभू:) means bail, surety, guarantee. Daya Devi is the guarantor, and guarantees certainty of reward, though the rewarder may not be there.

This sloka refers to the short-lived greatness of persons who dole out from a position of power, rewards and benefits to others smaller than themselves. Even during the short time that a god officiates as a god, it is only with the strength given by Daya that he gets the capacity to reward others. This topic has been touched upon in this sloka particularly to show that just as the sinners need not be afraid of receiving punishment if they rely on Daya, the virtuous men need not be afraid of losing their reward.

त्वदुपसदनादद्य श्वो वा महाप्रलयेऽपि वा
वितरति निजं पादाम्भोजं वृषाचलशेखरः ।
तदिह करुणे तत्तत्क्रीडातरङ्गपरम्परा-
तरतमतया जुष्टायास्ते दुरत्ययतां विदुः ॥ (७९)

Tvadupasadanaat adya svovaa mahaapralayepi vaa
vitarati nijam paadaambhojam Vrishaachalasekharaha ।
Tad-iha Karune! tattadkreedaatarangaparamparaa-
taratamatayaa jushtaayaaste duratyayataam viduhu ॥ (79)

Devi Karuna! on those who resort to you, and take refuge in you, the Lord of Vrishachala is certain to confer the blessing of His lotus Feet. It may be today, or it may be tomorrow, or it may be only during the Mahapralaya. But the conferment is certain. Therefore it is that the learned people have understood you, with you variegated sportiveness, that is itself like a succession of waves. are indeed hard to be overcome or fathomed.

Having dealt with the way in which Daya operates to punish the sinners, and guarantee rewards to good men, Desika harks back to the one topic which alone is uppermost in his mind,—the attainment by all human beings of the Feet of the Lord. Though Daya is capable of relieving us from the burden of sins, and of seeing to it that we get rewarded for our good deeds, yet her primary desire is to see that we attain the Feet of the Lord and get away from the realm of Papa and Punya. That the attainment of beatitude at the Feet of the Lord is the positive content of saranagati is once again emphasised in this sloka. At the same time, the difference in the time of attainment, which in turn depends upon the intensity of the yearning of the upasaka to attain the Feet of the Lord, and the consequent difference in Dayaprasaada, is the topic dealt with in this sloka. If the yearning of a person to reach the Feet of the Lord is so intense that he adopts saranagati for immediate release from samsara, Daya Devi secures to him that desire of his by seeing that the Lord takes him unto His feet immediately, forthwith;—अदद्य, here and now. Svaha श्वः means tomorrow. That is, slightly delayed. If as in the case of most of our Acharyas, the prapatti is performed with a view to attain the Feet of the Lord at the end of this bodily existence, surely Daya Devi sees to it that the heart's desire of such a person is fulfilled, and the moment his connection with this particular body ceases, he is taken straight to the Feet of the Lord. There are other cases like those of certain highly developed souls, like Brahma and so on, where the delay will be enormous, as long, possibly, as the Mahapralaya itself, which comes once in a milleneum. The point to note is that whatever the period of time, however short it may be, or however long it may be, there is a certainty here of attainment. The difference in the period of attainment is due to differences in the sportiveness (क्रीडातरङ्गपरंपरा) Kreeda-taranga-parampara of Daya Devi. Like the waves of a reservoir of water, some being small and some being large, the lapse of time between the performance of saranagati and the attainment of the Lord's Feet, is either short or long according to the Kreeda or Leela of Daya Devi. This again is conditioned by the intensity, or the absence of it, in the prapanna. The emphasis on the whole is on the certainty of attainment. The Lord that has created the world has promised His feet to those who seek them. The actual time of attainment alone is left in doubt. Here also the Lord, or rather Daya Devi, acts according to the desire of the Upasaka. This is again Bhakta-chchandanuvartana भक्तच्छन्दानुवर्तन. The person who performs prapatti for being taken to the Feet of the Lord at once is called ' Aarthaprapanna ' आर्तप्रपन्न. A person who performs saranagati for attaining the feet of the Lord at some future time is called ' druptaprapanna ' दृप्तप्रसन्न.

This sloka is remnicient of the verse of Tirumazhisai Alwar in his Naanmugan Tiruvandadi. The language and the sentiment are taken from there.

" இன்றாக, நாளையேஆக, இனிச்சிறிது
நின்றுஆக, நின்னருள் என்பாலதே "

Let it be today, let it be tomorrow, or let it tarry for some more time. I am sure to be the recipient of your grace. Desika has substituted the Mahapralaya for இனிச் சிறிது நின்று, while wholly adopting the sentiments of today and tomorrow in the Alwar's verse. That is the security that the true devotees of the Lord feel, once they have thrown themselves on the mercy of the Lord. If Daya Devi guarantees to us all that are to be distributed by small and minor gods as stated in the previous sloka, who can doubt the certainty of the fruits in her own gift? This sloka following as it does the previous sloka, furnishes us an a *fortiori* किमुत argument in support of the positive certainty of attainment of the Feet of the Lord by all those who resort to Daya and take refuge in her for attaining the greatest of blisses that can be got by mankind, and is in fact the inheritance of mankind.

प्रणिहितधियां त्वत्संपृक्ते वृषाद्रिशिखामणौ
प्रसृमरसुधाधाराकारा प्रसीदति भावना ।
दृढमिति दये दत्तास्वादं विमुक्तिवलाहकं
निभृतगरुतो निध्यायन्ति स्थिराशयचातकाः ॥ (८०)

Pranihitadhiyaam tvatsamprikte Vrishaadrisikhaamanau
prasrimarasudhaa dhaaraakaarau praseeduti bhaavanaa ।
Dridhamiti Daye! dattaasvaadam vimuktivalaahakam
nibhritagaruto nidhyaayanti sthiraasayachaatakaaha ॥ (80)

Daya Devi! To all those who centre their minds upon the glorious Crest-jewel of Vrishadri Who is intimately associated with you,—contemplation similar to the incessant flow of nectar in a very fine and clear form will result. Gladdened in every pore and cell of their body thereby, the upasakas with their one-pointed devotion towards Lord Srinivasa, who is like a cloud showering moksha, and with unswerving minds like the mind of the chataka bird, those great ones revel in the contemplation of that cloud with all their other senses drawn in.

Having touched upon the delay that is likely to occur, for ever so many reasons, between the observance of prapatti or saranagati, and the attainment of the Feet of the Lord, in the previous sloka, Desika deals here with the state of mind of the prapanna during that period, As the prapanna has pitched his mind and heart upon the Lord's lotus feet, and has also performed prapatti for attaining the same, his mind will contemplate with pleasure on those Feet which he is going to attain, may be tomorrow, or may be a little later. Like the Rajakumara, crown-prince, for whose coronation a day has been fixed, this prapanna will be ever looking forward with great joy and pleasure to the realisation of his heart's desire that has to come. Every moment his mind will be dwelling happily upon the pleasure that awaits him. Therefore his mind will be wholly devoted towards that Lord who is going to give him that pleasure. That Lord is Vrishaadrisikhaamani—the crest jewel of Vrishadri. And He is sweetened by contact with Daya. The sweetness of the blending of the milk ocean with the nectar ocean has already been enjoyed in a previous sloka. Even the contemplation of the pleasures of the union with the Lord is like the flow of nectar. Bhaktiyoga has been said somewhere to be the ceaseless and incessant contemplation and flow of love like the incessant and unbroken flow of oil or ghee: Thailadaaraavat-avichchannasmrutisantana—तैलधारावत् अविच्छिन्नस्मृतिसन्तान. Desika here uses the word ' Sudhaadhaara ' सुधाधार or the flow of nectar, to illustrate the flow of love towards the Lord. That contemplation or bhavana will be clear and pellucid. Valmiki has used a simile comparing the clear-as-crystal waters of the Tamasa river to the mind of Sanmanushya. We are reminded of that statement of Valmiki by this sloka which talks of ' prasrimarasudhaadhaara praseedati bhaavanaa '

The pure and uncontaminated state of the prapanna in the interim period, that is after prapatti and before the attainment of the Lord's feet, is again likened to the state of the chaataka bird—vide sloka 58 *ante*. Here, once again Lord Srinivasa is likened to a cloud; only it is stated here that the rain that flows from this cloud is ' Vimukti ' विमुक्ति or moksha. ' Nibhruta garutaha ' means movementless wing of a bird. So the Sat of the upanishads, Sanmanushya of Valmiki, and the prapanna here, desists from flight into other spheres by (inhibiting) withdrawing the wings to attain concentration in contemplation. The enjoyment that the prapanna attains during this period is almost akin to mokshananda. Except for the contact with the body, he is really a mukta, a jeevanmukta if one may so call him.

The Lord's desire or *ichcha*, that Daya is, has been shown in this decad, which closes with this sloka, to function in such a manner that those who are the objects of that *ichcha* or desire are able to cast off all sins and are assured of complete release from the cycle of births and deaths, and union with the Lord at some time or other in the future, about the duration of which time they need not bother, because at the end of it realisation is certain; and what is more, even before the realisation comes to them in full form, they enjoy all the benefits of that realisation even now, and even here. That is why Daya Devi pretending to give him what he desires, gives him what in her view is the greatest and highest good.

श्रीमते निगमान्तमहादेशिकाय नमः
श्री श्रीनिवास परब्रह्मणे नमः

॥ दयाशतकम् ॥

DAYAA SATAKAM

NINTH DECAD.

THE Lord's unbounded kindness towards prapannas was very well illustrated by the two previous decads, which respectively dealt with (*a*) His essential nature of dispelling sins and their unpleasant consequences (anishta) and (*b*) His overwhelming love towards the prapannas, which is willing to adapt itself to their desires with a view to ultimately sublimate those desires into God-ove. This idea has been well expressed by Desika elsewhere also. Vide Dramidopanishad Saram:

अथुानिष्टान् पुंसां स्वयमुपजिगीर्षन्नपि विभुः
तदिच्छां बाह्येषु प्रशमयितुकामः क्रमवशात् ।
निजेच्छासंसिद्ध त्रिविधचिदाचिद्वस्तुविततिः
श्रितेच्छावैचित्रीवश इति वदत्पष्टमशते ॥

" With a view to dispel and banish the *anishtas* of men and in order o see that their desire for worldly pleasures is gradually put down, He the Lord of all, who has the entire threefold chetana and acheana creation under His own sway, yields Himself up to the variegated desires of His followers." (Those who are interested in pursuing the theory that is being elaborated in this commentary, hat the theme for each of the ten decads of this stotra is furnished by the respective themes of the ten centums of Nammalwar's Tiruvoimozhi, as laid down by Desika, will have noticed the use of everal identical words and phrases in this sloka of Dramidopanishad Saram and the 81st sloka of Daya Satakam).

This ninth decad furnishes the reason why the Lord is so fond of His devotees, and fond to the extent of coming down to heir level. He is shown here to be a *nirupadhi Suhrit* निरुपधि सुहृत्

--a friend whose friendship is not caused by any extraneous cause, consideration, or circumstance, but is a friendship without any reason or cause—Avyaaja Sauhaarda अव्याजसौहार्द. This is best illustrated by His coming into the world taking various forms. As Nammalwar has put it, there is no form of existence which He has not adopted. *எந்நின்ற யோனியுமாய்ப் பிறந்தாய்* (Born out of every conceivable womb). The upanishad praises Him as one who obtains lustre and glory by being born. सउश्रेयान् भवति जायमानः Consistently with Desika's view that every merit in the Lord, that makes Him what He is, is to be traced to the presence of Daya, he sets out in this decad to enjoy the avatars, and to show the part played by Daya in each avatar. Already in sloka 35 it has been said that the Lord takes His several avatars only at the behest of Daya Devi. That idea is elaborated in this decad. Most appropriately the metre employed for the slokas of this decad is Prithvi पृथिवी.. Prithvi means earth. Avatara — अवतार — is a descent into the earth. Prithvi is thus the topic of this decad, and it is also the metre employed for this decad. This is the last of the series of five different metres, all of which have 17 syllables in a *paada* or quarter, employed in this stotra.

The consummate art of the poet can be seen from the following words all of which are synonymous with *prithvi* being employed in the slokas of this decad:

Sloka 81—Jagat, Kshiti; 82—Jagat; 83—Kshiti, medini; 85—Jagat; 86 Kshiti; 87—Jagat, Kshiti; 88—Jagat; 89—Visvambhara; Jagat; 90—Bhuvi.

The omission of a word synonymous with *prithvi* in sloka 84 relating to Narasimhavatara must be deliberate; probably to indicate that as per the boon accorded to Hiranyakasipu, he could not be killed on earth.

कृपे विगतवेलया कृतसमग्रपोषैस्त्वया
कलिज्वलनदुर्गते जगति कालमेघायितम् ।
वृषक्षितिधरादिषु स्थितिपदेषु सानुप्लवै-
र्वृषाद्रिपतिविग्रहैर्व्यपगताखिलावग्रहैः ॥ (८१)

Kripe! vigatavelayaa kritasamagraposhais-tvayaa
Kalijvalanadurgate jagati kaalameghaayitam ।
Vrishakshitidharaadhishu sthitipadeshu saanuplavair—
Vrishaadripativigrahair-vyapagataakhilaavagrahaihi ॥ (81)

Kripa Devi! Because of you with a capacity to transgress banks and bunds (by overflowing), this world suffering under the fire of Kali (the dark age) is made into a Kalamegha (dark and rain-laden cloud) by the Vigrahas (Images) of the Lord of Vrishadri which are plentifully fed (i.e., full of water), which are capable of dispelling all drought (distress), and which are to be seen along with their full retinue in Venkatachala and other permanent abodes of the Lord.

The sentiments of the last sloka of the previous decad run into this first sloka of this ninth decad. The cloud, and the chataka bird which looks up to that cloud for its sustenance, were referred to there. In this sloka it is pointed out that that cloud is nothing but the archa forms of the Lord dwelling in the permanent—Sthithipada—forms of Images in Temples.

In sloka 45 ante, Daya was likened to the clouds. Here the clouds are the Images of the Lord in Temples. As usual the *upama* or analogy is worked out to perfection. Let us enjoy the slesha rasa in each of the epithets.

(1) Krita-samagraposhaihi: कृतसमग्रपोषैः The clouds are fully fed by water. They are இலங்கொலி நீர்ப் பெரும்பௌவம் மண்டியுண்ட பெருவயிற்றகருமுகில், as Tirumangai Alwar would have it—clouds which have devoured the big ocean with shining and noisy waters. The Archa form of the Lord is similarly well fed by Daya Devi. समग्र *Samagra* is fully, entirely; कृत-पोषै krita-poshaihi fed. The proximity of the word त्वया *tvaya* with the compound word 'krita-samagra-poshaihi' is fraught with significance. It is only in the Archa forms of the Lord that Daya plays the largest part. Vibhava forms of the Lord have a mixture of लीला *leela* or sport in them—vide 'atmaleelaapadesaihi' in sloka 35 used in connection with Vibhava roopas of the Lord.

Krita-samagra-poshaihi can also be taken to mean feeding every one fully. This also will apply both to the cloud and to the Archa.

(2) Vyapagataakhilaavagrahaihi-with all sorts of drought and distress dispelled. Avagraha, meaning drought (want of rain or water), is dispelled by the clouds that bring in rain and water. Avagraha may also be taken to mean erratic or excessive rain, each of which can be as pestilential as total want of rain.

Applied to Archa, this compound word can be taken to indicate the dispelling of all famine of spirit. Being ever present in our midst, and ever and anon approachable by us, we need never feel left out, or left alone.

(3) Vrisha-kshiti-dharaadhishu-sthitipadeshu-saanuplavaihi:

Along with followings or followers in spots like Vrishagiri Hill.

The Kalamegha or dark cloud full of water always sits on the hill-tops. It is attended by lightning, thunder, winds and so on.

So too the archa forms of the Lord adorn Vrishagiri and other sacred Hills like the Himalayas (Badrinath). Alagar Hill near Madurai, and so on. If the clouds are attended by lightning thunder and so on, the Lord in His Archa form has His own attendants (followers) such as Ananta (Adisesha) Garuda and Vishvaksena (Commander-in-Chief) not to speak of the Alwars and Acharyas who also reside in the Temples in archa form round the Central Archa Form.

Thus it is said this world is overrun by the great clouds that are Vrishadripati Vigrahaas– or the auspicious and lovable Image forms of Lord Srinivasa, and thereby has its heat engendered by Kali, the dark age, driven out.

The greatness of Archavatara and of the benefits that Archas confer on the world is markedly emphasised in and by this sloka. That the Form of Lord Srinivasa is a Premier Archa Form is also pointed out. Desika's fascination for Archa and for the Lord of Tirumala is once again seen here.

For Vigatavelayaa, there is another rendering as 'Viduruta-lokayaa' विध्रुतलोकया meaning bearing up and supporting the worlds, as governing tvaya (you) referring to Daya. (81)

प्रसूय विविधं जगत्तदभिवृद्धये त्वं दये
    समीक्षणविचिन्तनप्रभृतिभिः स्वयं तादृशैः ।
विचित्रगुणचित्रितां त्रिविधदोषवैदेशिकीं
    वृषाचलपतेस्तनुं विशसि मत्स्यकूर्मादिकाम् ॥ (८२)

Prasooya vividham jagat tadabhivriddhaye tvam Daye!
    sameekshana vichintanaprabhritibhis-svayam taadrisaihi ।
Vichitragunachitritaam vividhadoshavaidesikeem
    Vrishaachalapates-tanum visasi Matsyakoormaadikaam ॥ (82)

Daya Devi! After having begotten this varied and variegated world, with a view to bring about its welfare and improvement by such notable acts like seeing, thinking about, etc., you enter into the bodies of (taken by) the Lord of Vrishaachala which are beautiful and lovable because of their wonderful character and characteristics, and which are devoid of all kinds of blemishes,—bodies like those of a fish, tortoise etc.

The avataras of the Lord are innumerable. अजायमानो बहुदा विजायते. He who has no birth takes numberless births—as the Upanishad puts it. But traditionally ten of those avataras have become very celebrated. They are Matsya, Koorma, Varaha, Narasimha, Vamana, Parasurama, Rama, Balarama, Krishna and Kalki. These are referred to as the Dasavataras or Ten avatars of the Lord. Desika has given to us a stotra known as Dasavatara Stotra. In this decad he again celebrates those ten avatars. The purpose of the Dasavathara description here is to demonstrate the Lord's unconditioned and spontaneous feelings of friendliness (Avyaaja sauhaardha) towards the denizens of the earth, which are responsible for His descent (avatara) into this world.

The first sloka of this decad was devoted to the enjoyment of the Archavataras which are permanent avataras. This sloka enjoys two of the impermanent avatars, the Vibhava avatars, the first two out of the ten set out above, the *matsya* and the *koorma*, the Fish form and the Tortoise form. The eight other avatars are then enjoyed in a sloka each,--slokas 83 to 90.

It is first stated here that the purpose of the several avatars is the अभिवृद्धि *abhivriddhi*—growth--of the created world. Having created the world and brought it into being प्रसूय (prasooya) Daya begins to work for its growth and fulfilment. The method adopted for effecting this growth is indicated by the words sameekshana-vichintana-prabhritibhihi: seeing, thinking etc. The Lord bestows His Divine glance and there is growth all round. The Lord always thinks about the welfare of the world that has been created by Him. He is Viswa-paripaalanajaagarooka—विश्वपरिपालन-जागरूक—ever watchful about the protection of the entire world.

While thus describing the Lord's seeing and thinking, Desika has very cleverly indicated the way a fish and a tortoise protect each its respective offspring. The fish does not suckle its offspring, nor the tortoise. The fish feeds its baby by looking at it. The parent tortoise thinks of the baby-tortoise and the baby grows thereby. Students of modern biology will confirm this peculiarity of nature in these two creatures, one which has been observed and laid down in a very old saying:

> " Eekshanadhyanasamsparsaihi matsya-koorma-vihangamaha
> Pushnanti svaanapatyaani..........."

> ईक्षणध्यानसंस्पर्शैः मत्स्यकूर्मविहङ्गमाः ।
> पुष्णन्ति स्वान्यपत्यानि .... ॥

The Matsyaavatara and the Koormavatara are indicated by the reference to the fish and tortoise, matsya and koorma. The Lord assumes the form of a fish and protects the world by His glances. The Lord assumes the form of a tortoise and thinks about the world and thereby works its welfare.

How is he enabled to do so? Daya Devi enters into His bodies—the fish body and the tortoise body—of her own volition (swayam). The bodies are 'Vichitra-guna-chitrita' beautiful and lovely to look at because of their marvellous make up. And they are 'vivida-dosha-vaidesika' far removed from all sorts of faults and blemishes. Because it is referred to as a body, the Lord's body should not be confounded with the perishing and perishable bodies such as ours. The material of those bodies is suddha-satva. It is not trigunaatmaka, *i.e.*, made of satva, rajas and tamas.

Lord Sri Krishna's exposition in the Gita about the nature of his incarnations must be properly understood before we can attempt to evaluate those incarnations. The two compounds 'vichitra-guna-chitritaam' and 'vivida-dosha-vaidesikeem' as qualifying the word tanum (तनुं) remind us of all the excellences of the Lord's body assumed during avatars, as described in the Gita and enjoyed in the other Sanskrit and Tamil religious classics of our land. Just as the Divyaatmaswaroopa of the Lord has the two chief characteristics known as ubhaya-linga *viz.*, kalyanagunapoorti कल्याणगुणपूर्ति and heya-gunaraahitya हेयगुणराहित्य (full of all auspicious qualities, and totally devoid of bad or evil qualities,) the Divya-mangala-vigraha is also vichitra-guna-chitrita and vividha-dosha-vaidesikee.

Readers would have noticed how the word *vigraha* was used in the previous sloka, while the word used in this sloka is ***Tanu,*** Both the words are capable of signifying the body: but vigraha is more appropriate to denote the body which is the image or Idol and Tanu to denote the body of the Lord during His avatars as Rama, Krishna etc. That is why these latter are referred to as incarnations.

Svayam-visasi-matsya-koormaadikaam-tanum—You yourself of your own accord enter into the bodies such as those of the fish and tortoise. The Lord takes those forms and Daya Devi enters into them. The upanishadic Tat-anupravisya—तदनुप्रविश्य (during the process of creation) is brought to our minds here by the use of the word Visasi—विशासि. There the Lord is said to enter into the world created by Him out of Himself. Here Daya Devi is said to enter into the bodies adopted by Him during His incarnations.

The words prabruti—प्रभृति—and the word aadi—आदि—have been deliberately used to include the Hamsavatara of the Lord by suggestion. It is not one of the ten notable avatars. Hence it is not named, but left to be understood, since there is no intention to specify it. The ancient saying extracted above refers to birds in addition to fish and tortoise, and the process of feeding in regard to birds is indicated by the word *samsparsaihi*– संस्पर्शैः: by close touch or embrace. It is a wellknown fact that birds closely embrace their young ones: in fact hatching is a process of close contact very much akin to embrace.

The protection afforded by the Lord in his incarnations is here pointed out to be a Dayakarya, Daya's act. Having created the world the Lord does not leave it to itself. He casts longing and loving glances at the world. And the world is always in His thoughts. Thereby He protects and helps the world to grow. The desire to protect is furnished by Daya Devi.

The reference to the two incarnations of Matsyavatara and Koormavatara as the bodies of Vrishachalapathi is intended to convey to us Desika's conviction that the Archavatara of the Lord is potent enough to furnish the basis for vibhava-avatara. This is a very noteworthy idea of Desika which finds expression in the Paduka Sahasra and other works in Sanskrit and Tamil. Consistently with those sayings Desika refers to the Vibhava avataara bodies as belonging to Lord Srinivasa, Himself an Archa (Vide also Bhava-to-avataaraan भवतोऽवतारान् of Varadaraja Panchasat).

युगान्तसमयोचितं भजति योगनिद्रारसं
वृषक्षितिभृदीश्वरे विहरणक्रमाज्जाग्रति ।
उदीर्णचतुरर्णवीकदनवेदिनीं मेदिनीं
समुद्धृतवती दये त्वदभिजुष्टया दंष्ट्रया ॥ (८३)

Yugaanatasamayochitam bhajati yoganidraarasam
Vrishakshitibrideesvare Viharanakramaat jaagrati ।
Udeernavachaturarnavee kadanavedineem medineem
samuddhrutavatee Daye! tvadabhijushtayaa damshtrayaa ॥ (83)

Daya Devi! At the end of yugas (i.e., at the time of Pralaya) Lord Srinivasa enjoys the pleasures of yoga-nidra (yogic sleep); by the time He, as part of the same sportfulness, gets awake, the earth is swallowed up by the swelling waters of the four seas; and you noting its distress lift it up by means of the Tusk (Tooth) (of the Varaha, Boar) into which you merged (combined).

On one occasion when the world got submerged in water the Lord lifted it up by taking the form of a boar and holding the earth aloft on the Tusk (protruding tooth) of that Boar form. That avatara is the topic of this sloka, but it is to be noted that there is no reference to the Varaha or Boar. It is left to be inferred from the word damshtra—दंष्ट्र. The place of Daya in each avatar is the chief point that Desika wants to drive home, in singing about the avatars here in the Daya Sataka. In this avatara her place is in that tusk which lifted up the earth, 'tvat-abhijushtayaa'—annexed or attached to you. There is a rendering for this phrase as tatabhi-jushtaya damshtrayaa' तदभिजुष्टया meaning the tusk or tooth annexed to Him, the Lord. 'Tvat' is the better reading than 'tat.' The emphasis is on Daya's part in the redemption of earth from water.

Just as seeing and thinking were attributed to Daya in the previous sloka, the uplifting tusk in the Varaha avatara is associated with Daya in this sloka.

Pralaya is nicely referred to here as the period of the Lord's yoga-nidra. It is also said that this sleep is a fitting pastime for the Lord at the end of the yuga. This 'sleep' is resorted to by way of enjoyment by the Lord. It is nidraa-rasam or the pleasure of sleep.

Sleep terminates with awakening. Like sleep, the awakening is also a *viharana* or sport to the Lord.

The seas are referred to as the four seas—it must mean seas from all the four directions. In the Hindu mythology the number of the seas is seven and not four. (83)

सटापटलभीषणे सरभसाट्टहासोद्भटे
स्फुरत्क्रुधि परिस्फुटद्भ्रुकुटिकेऽपि वक्त्रे कृते ।
दये वृषगिरीशितुर्दनुजडिम्भदत्तस्तना
सरोजसदृशा दृशा समुदिताकृतिर्दृश्यसे ॥ (८४)

Sataapatalabheeshane sarabhasaattahaasodbhate
sphuratkrudhi parisphutadbhrukutike-api vaktre krite ।
Daye Vrishagireesitur-Danujadimbhadattastanaa
sarojasadrisaa drisaa samuditaakritir-drisyase ॥ (84)

Daya of Vrishagirieesa! Though the frightfulness of the thick cluster of matted hair (mane), the fast and frightening loud roar, and the trembling eye-brows, rendered the face (of the Lion-God, Narasimha) quivering with anger, terrible to look at, you are seen in your full bloom and colours suckling that child (Prahlada) of the demon (Hiranya) through the eyes that resemble the lotus.

This sloka deals with Narasimha Avatara--the incarnation in which the Lord was seen with the body of a man below the neck and the face of a lion above the neck (आकण्ठमादिपूरुषं कण्ठीरवमुपरि). It is a mixture of the lion and the man ((நரம் கலந்த சிங்கம்). In this sloka we see only the lion portion—the face portion. It was terrible to look at. The (sataa) mane was frightening with its cluster (patala) of matted hair. To that was added attahaasa (loud laughter) the terrific roar issuing from the lion's mouth. The eyebrows were quivering (with anger). Indeed the whole face was indicative of the anger that the Lord felt at the atrocities and iniquities of Hiranyakasipu the demon-king in subjecting his own son—a boy—*(தன் சிறுவன்)* to endless tortures,—all for the fault of daring to talk in his presence about the greatness and might of the Lord. The intensity of that anger is echoed in the words of the first half of this sloka which is intended to describe it.

Just as we are left wondering as to what place, lot, or part, soft and sweetnatured Daya is going to have in this fiery and fire-emitting (எரி கான்று) process, Desika delights us by giving to us the latter half of the sloka, in soft and mellifluous language—(just the opposite of the language employed in the first half)—which tells us that in the midst of that ferocious face, Daya had her place in the eyes of the Lord,—the soft, sweet, lotus-like eyes, which, so to say, suckled child Prahlada,—the devotee of devotees, and gave him sustenance, strength, and courage.

Danuja is asura, Dimbha is child, Datta-stana is giving and nourishing with breast milk. Daya Devi, mother of all that she is, (Bhuvana-jananee—sloka 72 ante) demonstrates that motherhood to Prahlada by giving him that milk. She is now seen blended with the lotus-like eyes of the Lord. 'Sarojasadrisaa-drisaa-samuditaakritir-drisyase.' The brows of the Lord immediately above the eyes quiver with fire. The mane further up is bristling with anger. The nostrils and the mouth are spitting fire and letting out peals after peals of thundering roar. In between, are the eyes of the Lord, soft, quiet peaceful and unruffled by all that is seen above and below, and those eyes bespeak love and peace, courage and comfort to the child Prahlada. Truly a wonderful pen-picture this. And note the words employed to describe the terror and to describe the peace. Sense and sound fit each other. Who but a Kavi-simha can sing of Nara-simha in such apt and wonderful language?

The word 'Krite' कृते of the first half has to be read with the word 'drisyase' दृश्यसे with which the sloka ends. Though the face was made to look so terrific, you Daya Devi are seen like a lotus. The use of the word *Krite* shows that the Lord deliberately took on that fearful face with a view to frighten and subdue that demon-king, who thought he was invulnerable and that there was no god but himself. This mixture of man and lion was also adopted in view of certain boons granted to him by Brahma.

Whatever that may be, the Lord was not able to spoil the beauty of His own eyes and to make them frightful on a par with the rest of the face. For are they not the seat of Daya as enjoyed already in previous slokas such as 42 and 48?

A very great truth is divulged here. The lotus eyes of the Lord are a distinguishing feature and identifying mark of Lord Srinivasa. He is for that reason known and very often referred to in Tamil as Kannan (கண்ணன்), one with *Eyes*. Sage Markandeya in the Vana-Parva of the Maha Bharata draws the attention of Yudhistira and his brothers to those lotus eyes of Lord Sri Krishna, and asks them to surrender themselves to Him as He is by that very fact the Lord Supreme. And whatever makes for the supremacy of the Lord, it is Desika's conviction that it is of Daya's making.

The sloka has been hitherto understood only in the light of the words employed and their exact meaning. So understood, the eyes of the Lord have been enjoyed as soft and sweet like a lotus. But taking the whole of the first half of the sloka calculated to describe that angry face (spuratkrudi) it is impossible to escape the conclusion that to Hiranya,—to strike terror in whose mind that fearful lions's face was put on,—even the eyes looked fiery and fierce. This is how several Alwars have sung about this avatar. (*e.g.*, அனல் விழி, Tirumangai Alwar, 'எரிவட்டக் கண்கள்,' Tirumalisai Alwar) Desika's enjoyment of the Lord has always followed that of the Alwars. So it is intended—we may safely assume—that the eyes also of Lord Narasimha were fearful to Hiranya.

This interpretation is essential to bring out another great quality of the Lord—the aghatita-ghatanaa-saamarthya or the capacity to bring together and blend opposites and irreconcilables. The eyes of Lord Narasimha shot out fire and anger to Hiranya, the father. At the same time and place, those very eyes exhuded love, affection and compassion to the boy Prahlada, like a lotus exhuding honey. The lioness is capable of frightening the elephant with its fiery and fierce looks (தீ விழித்து as Andal would have it) even during the time when it is suckling its baby through its teats. That is a place where two different feelings are simultaneously let out from two different organs. But here it is the same organ at the same time emitting fire to one person and secreting milk and honey to another. Desika's poetic genius alone can conceive of, and describe, such a phenomenon.

In a stotra of Desika called Kaamaasikaashtaka this sloka finds a place almost with the same words. The high-sounding first half is there in its entirety. The second half is as follows:

कृपाकपटकेसरिन्! दनुजडिंभदत्तस्तना
सरोजसदृशादृशा व्यतिभिषज्यते व्यज्यते ॥

As that sloka is addressed to the Lord, just as this sloka is addressed to Daya, He is called Kripaa-Kapata-Kesarin! meaning "you who out of Kripa or mercy disguised yourself as a lion!." Kesari is the mane, and a lion is known as a Kesari for that reason. The last words of that sloka "Vyatibishajyate Vijayate" व्यतिभिषज्यते व्यज्यते in substitution of "Samuditaakritir-drisyase" of this sloka mean; are seen to doctor (administer medicine) to counteract the father's cruelty.

As in sloka 83, in this sloka of Daya Sataka also no open reference has been made to Narasimha, the avatar which is the topic of this sloka.

प्रसक्तमधुना विधिप्रणिहितैः सपर्योदकैः
समस्तदुरितच्छिदा निगमगन्धिना त्वं दये ।
अशेषमविशेषतस्त्रिजगदञ्जनाद्रीशितु-
श्चराचरमचीकरश्चरणपङ्कजेनाङ्कितम् ॥ (८५)

Prasaktamadhuna vidhipranihitais-saparyodakaihi
samastaduritachchidaa nigamagandhinaa tvam Daye! ।
Aseshan aviseshatas-trijagad Anjanaadreesitus-
charaacharam acheekaras-charanapankajenaankitam ॥ (85)

Daya Devi! you made all the three worlds consisting of movable objects and immovable objects, without distinction, bear the imprint (seal) of the lotus Foot of the Lord of Anjanaadri, from which flows honey in the shape of the water offered (to it) by Brahma in worship, a foot which is capable of cutting asunder (dispelling) all sins, and which has the flavour and the perfume of the Vedas.

This sloka deals with Trivikrama avatara. This is the one avatara that has been the subject of frequent praise in the ancient Vedas themselves. Needless to say the Alwars and Andal have celebrated it in their verses in a very large measure. Mahabali, an asura, had in him one great merit. Like the celebrated Karna of the Mahabharata, Bali was a great giver (दाता). The Lord exploited that merit in him, and begged of him in the shape of a dwarf (vamana) three feet of land to be measured by Him with His own foot (என்னுடைய பாதத்தால் யானளப்பமூவடி). In spite of the obstruction offered to such a gift by his own preceptor Sukracharya, Bali promised the Lord what He wanted.

And hardly had Bali said 'yes.' when the Lord grew into mighty proportions, measured all the world in one foot, all the space above in another, and asked Bali, space for the third.

In this act of the Lord reclaiming the world from Bali, Desika sees one great virtue, which no one else has thought of, and sings about it as Daya's grand idea and act, done in the interests of the safety and redemption of mankind. In measuring this earth by His foot the Lord is rightly pointed out as having placed His foot on all objects--*chara* and *achara*, moveable and immovable. He is said to have left the imprint (seal) of His foot on all, irrespective of everything (Aviseshataha).

What a lovely and glorious foot? It is a charana-pankaja—a foot that is a lotus. Just as a lotus exhudes honey, this charana-pankaja Foot-lotus, gives out plentiful of honey--rendered more plentiful by the *paadya* पाद्य (water offered to the feet of respectable persons in worship intended to wash them) that Brahma, the four-faced, offered in worship to the uplifted foot of the Lord in His Trivikrama form. That water is referred to here as saparyodaka, —or water used for worship. Saparya is worship, pooja. Brahma seated in his Satyaloka found all on a sudden the advent of the Lord's foot there and immediately offered *paadya* to it. That became the Ganges. Here the upama of the lotus is pushed further and the water flowing from the foot which is a lotus is referred to as madhu or honey in that lotus..

The Foot of the Lord is next described as Samasta-duritachchida All sins are dispelled thereby. Chchedana is forcibly cutting. The sins are all cut asunder by resort, in any form, to the Lord's charana-pankaja.

Nigama-gandhina is the next description. Exhuding the perfume and fragrance of the Vedas. This is a very favourite theme with Desika. Vide वेलातीतश्रुतिपरिमलं---Velateeta sruti parimalam of Bhagavadhyana sopaana and आमोदितोऽपि निगमैर्विभुरङ्घ्रियुग्मे Aamoditopinigamairvibhurangriyugme of Goda stuti. सर्वे वेदाः यत्पदमामनन्ति Sarve-vedaha-yatpadam-aamananti. All the Vedas deal only with His Feet. So they have the fragrance of the Vedas.

The Lord's charana pankaja is the seal. The whole world—nay the three worlds—got that seal affixed on them. Who put that seal on them? Daya herself. Note "Tvam Daye!" at the end of the second paada. Tvam ankitam acheekaraha—You made (the world) bear that mark or imprint of the seal. In all the other slokas of this decad where the sacred Hill of Tirumala is referred to, it is Vrishaachala, Vrishadri and so on. In this sloka alone, however, it is referred to as Anjanaadri—the collyrium Hill. Anjana or collyrium is a thick black paste very often used to bedeck the eyes with, especially by ladies. Here, where the imprint of a seal is the theme of the sloka, the reference to that black paste is obviously purposeful. Anjana serves the purpose of the ink that is used to put seals on documents nowadays.

To put our mark or name on a book or paper is to indicate that that book or paper belongs to us. Daya Devi by affixing the seal of the Lord's Foot, which has several marks on it

शङ्खरथाङ्गकल्पकध्वजारविन्दाङ्कुशवज्रलाञ्छनम् ।

as described by Alavandar in his Stotra Ratna, makes it certain that the entire world belongs to the Lord and is His property. It is for us to realise this, that we are His property. Not only by putting the mark of His foot on our heads, but by the wafting of the fragrance of the Vedas towards us, Daya Devi reminds us that we are His property. And by the touch of that foot our sins are all banished and we become pure.

This is what Trivikrama achieved, claiming all the worlds as His own and indelibly sealing them with the seal of His feet. This is again the work of Daya.

This sloka is the vital sloka in this decad. The 'nirupadhi suhrtva' of the Lord is beautifully brought out by the word 'avisheshataha.' It means without any distinction difference or discrimination. It also means without any merit or value. Ramanuja in his gadya has referred to the Lord as 'Anaalochita-visesha-asesha-loka-saranya' अनालोचितविशेष अशेषलोकशरण्य.

He is the refuge of all, and one who never pauses to look for any merit in them. The words of this sloka remind us of that description by adopting that sentiment and employing those very words asesha and visesha. This glory of the Lord was best demonstrated in His Trivikrama avataara, and is a feather—nay, a bright plume—in the cap of Daya Devi.

परश्वधतपोधनप्रथनसत्क्रतूपाकृत-
क्षितीश्वरपशुक्षरत्क्षतजकुङ्कुमस्थासकैः ।
वृषाचलदयालुना ननु विहर्तुमालिप्यथा
निधाय हृदये दये निहतरक्षितानां हितम् ॥ (८६)

Parasvatha tapodhana prathana satkratoopaakrita-
kshiteesvara pasuksharat kshatajakumkumasthaasakaihi ।
Vrishaachaladayaalunaa nanu vihartum aalipyathaa-
nidhaaya hridaye Daye! nihatarakshitaanaamihitam ॥ (86)

Daya Devi! It looks to me that the merciful Lord of Vrishachala has smeared you in sport with the kumkum-like blood flowing from the bodies of the kings of this earth who were slain like cows in the sacrificial Yaga of warfare conducted by that person rich in religious penance and holding a battle axe (in his hand) (Parasurama), with the idea of securing the safety of those who are rescued and protected by being killed.

Parasuramavatara is dealt with in this sloka. Parasurama and Balarama are, as already stated, included in the Dasavataaras, but they are avatars differing from the other avatars in several important respects. Firstly they are not the incarnations of the Lord Himself fully. Parasurama is Avesaavataara. आवेशावतार. Balarama is an incarnation of Adisesha. Avesaavatara means the Lord entering into an individual soul in an intense and intensive manner. Parasurama was born as a Brahmin, son of a great sage Jamadagni. To secure His purposes, the Lord entered into that person, and for that reason that avatar is celebrated as an avatar of the Lord Himself. The aavesa आवेश or entry of the Lord ended when Parasurama confronted Sri Rama, the next avatar. Parasurama is believed to be still alive, being one of the chirajeevinaas चिरजीविनाः like Hanuman and Aswathama.

That apart, Parasurama's one great work was the extermination of the Kshatriya Vamsa (race of kings), not once but 21 times. Because his father Jamadagni was killed by some Kshatriyas, he took the terrible vow of destroying all Kshatriyas. This he achieved by indulging in an orgy of war and killing. As explained by Lord Sri Krishna in the Vibhoothi Adhyaya of the Bhagavat Geeta, no one can achieve anything of importance except by the strength of the Lord. In killing 21 generations, so to say, of the kings of this land, Parasurama was infused with the spirit of the Lord. The Kings deserved to be killed because they were evil-minded and sinful. By being punished for their sins they were really benefited, for it is believed that punishment of that sort results in the safety of the killed, who are totally redeemed from their sins and taken to the higher worlds. In Srimad Ramayana Kishkinda Kanda, Sri Rama says that Manu has laid down

राजभिर्धृतदण्डास्तु कृत्वा पापानि मानवाः ।
निर्मलास्स्वर्गमायान्ति सन्तः सुकृतिनो यथा ॥ (18–33)

(Persons who having committed sins and crimes, get punished therefor by the Kings of the land, become pure (devoid of sin and crime) and attain swarga (the land of the gods) even like good people get them by their good deeds).

This truth is summarised in this sloka by the words निहतरक्षितानां हितं nihatarakshitaanaam hitam–the welfare (hita) attained by those who are protected by being killed, as a punishment. That the Lord as Parasurama had this in mind when destroying the Kshatriyas is expressed by the words—निधाया–nidhaaya–and हृदये, Hrudaye having in mind—keeping in mind—this truth about hita being conferred on those who are slain.

The other analogy of a yaga याग also emphasises this meaning. The warfare in which Parasurama killed the kings is referred to as a kratu— क्रतु or yagna यज्ञ—a religious sacrifice. It is a sat-kratu सत्क्रतु—a good and holy sacrifice. The *pasu* पशु or animal that is sacrificed at yagas and yagnas, it is believed, goes to Swarga. So too the Kings mowed down by Parasurama are indicated as having attained Swargaloka.

The reference to Parasurama by the words 'parasvatha-tapodhana' is itself significant. He was referred to as *asahanamuni* in Sloka 64. Here he is the axe-handed *tapasvi*—an apparent contradiction. In *prathana satkratu* there are two aspects, war and yaga. Parasvatha indicates war, and Tapodhana indicates yaga.

War, cruelty and destruction have no place in Daya's dictionary. As such, it is only the *hita* or welfare that is worked thereby that gives Parasurama and his actions a place in Daya Sataka. That aspect is stressed in this sloka and referred to as nihata-rakshana, protection of the killed.

Even so Desika does not desire to associate Daya with Parasurama's act. Instead he refers to Vrishaachala-Dayalu the merciful

Resident of Vrishachala as having been responsible for the massacre wrought by Parasurama.

It is up to every one to enjoy the nice trick played by Desika in this sloka of deliberately referring to Parasurama's cruel feats not as Daya's acts but as those of the Dayala of Vrishachala. What is more, all along what Daya has done to the Lord has been mentioned in several ways and several places. This is the only sloka which sings of what the Lord does to Daya. He is said to smear Daya Devi with the blood of the sacrificial cows—kings—in sport—vihartum विहृतुं. It is intended as a saffron-paste. Kumkuma is saffron and sthaasaka is perfume or fragrant unguents. Aalipyathaha आलिप्यथा: is smearing, here with perfumory unguents.

That Desika has sung this sloka in this wise to find a place even for Parasurama avataara in this Daya Sataka is clear from the use of the word Nanu ननु. Is it not so? It must be so. At least it looks to me to be so.

कृपे कृतजगद्धिते कृपणजन्तुचिन्तामणे
रमासहचरं क्षितौ रघुधुरीणयन्त्या त्वया ।
व्यभज्यत सरित्पतिः सकृदवेक्षणात्तत्क्षणा-
त्प्रकृष्टबहुपातकप्रशमहेतुना सेतुना ॥ (८७)

Kripe! Kritajagaddhite! Kripanajantuchintaamane!
Ramaasahacharam kshitau Raghudhureenayantyaa tvayaa ।
Vyabhajyata saritpatis-sakrid avekshanaat tatkshanaat
prakrishta bahupaatakaprasamahetunaa setunaa ॥ (87).

Kripa Devi! Doer of good to the world! Bestower of desires on helpless and hapless beings! It is only by you,—who made the Lord, who is ever followed by Lakshmi, come (into this world) as the chief of Raghu's race, in those days (i.e., at the time of Ramavatar),—that the great ocean (lord of the rivers) was divided into two by means of a bridge (Sethu) which, by a single sight of it, is capable of instantaneously subduing (quelling) all numerous heinous sins.

Parasurama to Sri Rama—what a pleasant and pleasing transition! Parasurama is also a Rama. Balarama who is to come next is also a Rama. But when one says Rama, no one thinks of any one except Sri Rama, celebrated by Valmiki in the greatest epic of all times, Srimad Ramayana. Parasurama and Balarama are Ramas with prefixes. Rama simpliciter is Sri Rama.

As Desika has said elsewhere the greatness of Rama has made it impossible for anyone else to answer to that name (ராம சப்தம் ஈரரக படாதபடி.)

It is here said that it is Daya who made the Lord a Raghu-dhureena, the chief of the race of Raghu. That is why out of all the avatars, this avatara alone is enjoyed by Desika in the Dasavatara stotra by the term 'Karunaa Kaakusta.' करुणा काकुत्स्थ Raghu was so great and noble that he gave his name to the race to which he belonged—the Soorya Vamsa. He was also one who established the Saranagati cult by his conduct. While enumerating the notable Saranyaas, or protectors of those who take refuge in them, Desika has included Raghu's name among them विश्वामित्र कपोत वानर रघुव्योमाध्वग प्रेयसी......*Abhayapradana Saaram.* Daya is here said to have *made* the Lord a Raghu-dhureena, a chief of Raghu's race and also a leader among Saranyaas,—Raghu being indicative not only of the race of Raghu but also of the race of protectors of prapannas. Thus an important aspect of Ramavatara is mentioned, and Daya said to be responsible for it, *viz.*, Saranaagata Samrakshana, which was the declared vrata (resolve) of Sri Rama

सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मीति च याचते ।
अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतत् व्रतं मम ॥

There are ever so many points of merit in Ramavatara. In this sloka Desika emphasises the legacy left by Him of the Sethu or bridge across the sea, built during Ramavatara, as the most outstanding feature of Ramavatara for the benefit of posterity. Rama came and went, but the Setu He built is a permanent relic of that glorious avatara, and is today saving millions of people who get a mere sight of it "Setum Dhristva"— सेतुं दृष्ट्वा merely by seeing the Setu or bridge,—so goes an ancient vachana (word)—all sins disappear. तं वीक्ष्य सेतुं अधुनापि शरीरवन्तः सर्वे षड़ूर्मि बहुलं जलधिं तरन्ति. (Varadaraja Panchasat). By seeing that Setu today, those born in this world are able to cross the ocean of samsara. Setu was built to make Rama and His army to cross over into Lanka. That selfsame Setu helps us to cross the ocean of Samsara and reach the glorious city of the Lord's Feet (see sloka 51 ante).

Sarit is river. Sarit-pati is the lord of the rivers—*i.e.*, the ocean. It was vyabhajyata—divided into two by Daya who by making the Lord become Rama was responsible for the erection of the Setu or bridge, dam, across the ocean. Setu darsana and Sethusnana are held very sacred by all Hindus and are believed to cleanse us of all our sins. And that is Dayakaarya—the work of Daya.

The reference to Mahalakshmi the consort of the Lord in this sloka must be specially enjoyed. There was no reference to Her in any of the previous slokas of this decad. Her place in the Ramavatara is unique. The Ramayana itself is called "Sitaayaascharitam mahat" सीतायाश्चरितं महत्. Her place in Saranaagati, and Her having been responsible for the construction of the Setu, do require that prominent mention should be made about Her in a sloka about Ramavatara. " Raghavatve-abhavat-Sita " राघत्वेऽभवत् सीता रुक्मिणी कृष्णजन्मनि ।...is what the Vishnu Purana has said. To sing about the Raghu-dhureena without mentioning Seeta will be improper and incomplete. As She follows Him in each avatar as stated in that sloka of Vishnu Purana, the reference to Him in this sloka is as Ramaa-sahacharam—रमा सहचरम् one who is followed by Rama (Lakshmi). Or is it one who follows Lakshmi? Vide अग्रतस्ते गमिष्यामि "She" is understood in every avatara, but in the Ramavatara she is very prominent. In Krishnaavataara again as Rukmini, Lakshmi fills an important place, and so in the next sloka but one She is going to be referred to.

Another special feature of this sloka is two extra sambhuddis (vocatives) in her praise, in addition to the usual Kripe! One is Krita-jagad-hite!—one who accomplishes the welfare of the world. The other is Kripana-jantu-chintamane! Chintamani is that mythological precious gem which like the Kalpaka tree is capable of conferring all desired boons. To those who realise that they are Kripanaas, helpless beings, Daya is the Chintamani, conferer of all boons and desires. One of the qualities referred to in Valmiki's classical questionnaire to Narada is contained in the question 'Sarva-bhooteshu-Ko-hitaha' सर्वभूतेषु को हित: The words Krita-jagat-hite reflect that quality of the Lord. The Lord's सकृत्प्रपन्नजनसंरक्षण दीक्षा is summarised by the epithet Kripana-jantu-chintamane! Daya's great qualities are best reflected in Rama who for that reason is known as Karunaakaakutstha— करुणाकाकुत्स्थ:

कृपे परत्वतस्त्वया वृषगिरीशितुः क्रीडितं
जगद्धितमशेषतस्तदिदमित्थमर्थाप्यते ।

मदच्छलपरिच्युतप्रणतदुष्कृतप्रेक्षितै-
र्हतप्रबलदानवैर्हलधरस्य हेलाशतैः ॥ (८८)

Kripe! paravatas-tvayaa Vrishagireesituh kreeditam
jagaddhitam aseshatas-tadidam ittam arthaapyate ।
Madachchalaparichyutapranata dushkritaprekshitair-
hataprabaladaanavair-Haladharasya helaasataihi ॥ (88)

Kripa Devi! All the sportings (leela) without exception of the Lord of Vrishaadri, Who is ever amenable and subservient to you, are (because of that very fact) calculated for the hita or welfare of the world. This is well borne out by the hundreds of sports, indulged in by that wielder of the plough (Balarama), which overlook, i.e., fail to attach importance to, the misdeeds of those who pay obeisance (bend themselves in salutation), ostensibly because of inebriety (due to heavy drinking), and which are responsible for killing several strong and noted asuras.

As already mentioned in the commentary on Sloka 86, Balarama is a secondary avatara of the Lord. Sesha (Adisesha) the Serpent-Couch of the Lord was born as Lakshmana when the Lord came as Rama, and as Balarama when the Lord came as Krishna. As the younger brother in the earlier avatara and as the elder brother in the later avatara, Lakshmana and Balarama respectively occupy a subordinate position and play a secondary role.

If anger was the keynote to Parasurama's acts, drink is Balarama's favourite pastime. Excessive drink leads to intaxication During such moments vision is blurred. That is caught hold of by Desika here nicely, and it is stated that vision being dim, recognition of the faults of those, who have appealed for succour by doing obeisance (pranata), slips, with the result that their faults go unnoticed. In sloka 8 at the beginning of this stotra some sort of dosha-adarsanatvam दोषादर्शनत्वं (fault-unseeingness) was attributed to the Lord Himself. That was caused by the amours of Neela Devi. In this Balaramavataar, there is the same lack of taking note of the devotee's faults; but this is due to drink.

Overlooking sins is what Daya Devi is anxious to bring about in the Lord, so that those sins may not stand in the way of His extending His protection to his pranataas (worshippers). That result is achieved in Balaramavatara by His frequently getting drunk, and not being in a position to take note of the sins of pranataas. This is a novel method of discovering merit even in drunknness. But as already stated, Desika is hard put to find points in Parasurama and Balarama for being enjoyed as part of the praise of Daya.

The other merit in the sports of Balarama is referred to in "hata-prabala-daanavaihi"—the destruction of the more noted asuras. Along with Krishna, Balarama has been responsible for the destruction of several asuras who were all sent by Kamsa to do away with Balarama and Krishna. That sort of asura-nirasana is referred to here.

Just as Parasurama has an axe as his weapon, Balarama has a plough (hala—हल) as his weapon. It is said that with that plough He dragged the whole city of Hastinapura into the Ganges. So Balarama is here referred to as Haladhara.

हेला—Hela is sport, play, Helaa-sata हेलाशत is hundreds of such sport.

From the above-mentioned two-fold merit in Balarama's sportiveness, it is stated that all the Kreeditvam or playfulness of the Lord is conceived for the benefit (hita) of humanity. The reason for it is not far to seek. The Lord is Daya-paratantra—dependent on and subservient to Daya Devi. Hence even His sports are beneficial to mankind. That Balarama's sports confirm this theory by illustrating it, is the purport of this sloka. In the Dasavatara Stotra, it is said that Balarama's leelas sweeten Krishna's leelas, like sugar sweetening milk.

प्रभूतविबुधद्विषद्भरणखिन्नविश्वंभरा-
    भरापनयनच्छलात्त्वमवतार्य लक्ष्मीधरम् ।
निराकृतवती दये निगमसौधदीपश्रिया
    विपश्चिदविगीतया जगति गीतायान्धं तमः ॥ (८९)

Prabhoota vibudhadvishad bharanakhinna Visvambharaa-
    bharaapanayanachchhalaat tvam avataarya Lakshmeedharam ।
Niraakritavatee Daye! nigamasaudhadeepasriyaa
    vipaschidavigeetayaa jagati Geetayaa andham tamaha ॥ (89)

Daya Devi! On the pretext of removing (doing away with) the burden under which Mother Earth was groaning by having to

carry (on her back) innumerable and mighty foes of the Devas, you made Him, who carries Lakshmi (on His chest), to come down to this earth, and (thereby) drove out all inner (mental) darkness with the help of the Bhagavat Geeta, whose beautiful effulgence is calculated to shed light and lustre on the lofty mansion of the Vedas, and whose greatness is accepted and praised by learned men the world over.

Krishna Avatara is being praised in this verse. Rama and Krishna as avatars excel the other avatars in ever so many respects. But there is one aspect in each of these two avatars which Desika draws our attention to, in the slokas devoted to the two of them. It is only these two avatars that have left permanent and imperishable relics of their having come and gone. The Setu (bridge over the sea) and the Geeta are those two respective relics. So Desika sings in these slokas of Daya's great help rendered to succeeding generations of humanity in the shape of these two emblems of the Lord's love towards all men.

Krishna the child is the darling of humanity. That aspect partakes of leela or kreeda. In Desika's view Karuna is the keynote of Ramavatara and Kreeda of Krishnavatara. That is why Rama is referred to as Karunaa-Kaakusta and Krishna as Kreeda-Vallabha, in the Dasavatara Stotra. This sloka devoted to Krishnavatara does not touch upon that sportful Child at all. Instead, taking its stand on the declaration of Lord Sri Krishna in the Geeta about the *raisonde'etre* of His avataara in general

परित्राणाय साधूनां विनाशाय च दुष्कृताम् ।
धर्मसंस्थापनार्थाय संभवामि युगे युगे ॥

the sloka dwells upon two important aspects, the wiping out of the asura elements which made the earth over-run by evil, and the promulgation of the Geeta. It is easily seen that duskkrit vinaasa is mentioned in the earlier portion of the sloka. The reference to Geeta in the latter portion has to be understood in its two-fold aspect, *viz.*, Sadhu-paritrana and Dharma Samsthapana. Which other work has the same capacity to make Sadhus of all men, and to protect them? And which other has been able to put dharma on a firm pedestal as Geeta has done? So it is that this sloka on Krishnavatara is conceived this wise.

The Dasamaskanda of the Srimad Bhagavata Purana starts with the episode of Mother Earth going to Brahmadeva in the form of a cow, and appealing to him for help to wipe off the heavy load of sinners, under whose atrocities she was suffering untold misery. That is brought to our minds here by the words "Vishvambharaa-bhara-apanayana" विश्वंभराभर–अपनयन, meaning relieving the earth from burden. Who make for that burden? Mother Earth is known for her patience. What or who is it that makes even her lose patience and begin to complain? The answer is furnished by the expression "prabhoota-vibhuda-dvishad-bharana-khinna." Suffering because of the weight of the large number of the Devas' foes.

That the extermination of asuras is done for the protection of the Devas is very naively brought out by referring to them not as asuras but as the foes of the Devas. The Lord Himself has no friends and no foes. The foes of those who look up to Him for protection are His foes, as Krishna Himself explained to Duryodhana when the latter wanted to play the host to the Lord. "Taking food from a foe is taboo—so too feeding a foe. You hate the Pandavas; and the Pandavas are the very life of my life."

द्विषदन्नं न भोक्तव्यं द्विषन्तं नैव भोजयेत ।
पाण्डवान् द्विषसे राजन् मम प्राणा हि पाण्डवाः ॥

We are reminded of this truth by the expression Vibuda-dvishad to denote the asuras.

Even more significant and beautiful is the use of the word "chchala," meaning pretext. The purpose of wiping out the asuras and thereby relieving the world of its burden is referred to as a chchala or a pretext, a guise, a semblance. This is not the chief object (मुख्यप्रयोजनं) of avatara as indicated by the 'cha' च in "Vinaasaaya-cha-dushkritaam." In the guise of sending the Lord to this world for the purpose of exterminating the evil forces of the asuras, you have really given to us the immortal and priceless Geeta,—that is the praise of Daya that this sloka contains.

The previous sloka used the word "chchala," Madachchala-parichyuta-pranata-dushkrita-prekshitaihi. On the pretence of being drunk, notice is not taken of the errors of followers. That the Lord as Balarama did not really get drunk was nicely indicated there. He pretended to have got intoxicated and therefore not in a position to see the fault in His devotees. The same word 'chchala' is used here again to bring out another great truth.

Avataarya—having made the Lord descend. Compare tvan-nidesena-noonam-bhajati-janmabhedaan' of sloka 35 ante. It is Daya that is responsible for the Lord's avatars.

'Lakshmee-dharam'; As already indicated Lakshmi is made specific mention of only in regard to Ramavatara and Krishnavatara. There it was Ramaa-sahacharam because it was an avatar in which the Two together traversed the entire Bharatavarsha. Here it is Lakshmee-dharam—He who always carries Her as part of Himself. Lakshmee-dhara is a synonym for Srinivasa, the God whose Daya is the subject of this stotra.

Having made the Lord and Sri descend into this earth as Krishna and Rukmini, ostensibly for the destruction of asuras, what is it that Daya Devi really achieved? That is dealt with in the second half of the sloka. The first and last words of that half are 'Niraakritavatee' and 'tamaha' respectively. Put together they mean "you have dispelled darkness"

How, by what? 'deepasriyaa Geetaya'—By a beautiful light known as the Geeta.

The greatness of the Geeta is enjoyed in two ways by two epithets. The first is Nigama-saudha-deepa-sriya-geetaya,—by the Geeta which adorns and illuminates the palatial mansion known as the Vedas. saudha is a big and beautiful mansion. Here Nigama (or the Vedas) is referred to as the saudha. The Vedas themselves are Knowledge and are very often referred to as light (வேதவிளக்கு). Vide Saastra-mayena-stira-pradeepena—sloka 18 ante. It is Desika's conviction that without the Bhagavat Geeta given out by the Lord Himself, and the Prabhandas (Tamil) given out by the Lord's own devotees, who intuited Him by His grace, the Vedas would not have yielded to us their true meaning. The light of the Geeta is praised here. The other light (Prabhandas) is praised thus: நான்மறையந்திநடைவிளங்கவெளிகாட்டும்மெய் விளக்கு The Geeta throws light on those Vedas themselves and so it is referred to as Deepa, and the Vedas as the Saudha, the mansion in and on which it sheds its lustre. The Geeta is a short and succinct summary of the elaborate and endless Vedas, whose true meaning it would have been difficult, if not impossible, to find but for the advent of the Geeta.

The other epithet in praise of the Geeta is Vipaschit—avigeetaya. Vipaschit indicates learned and wise men, pundits. Vigeeti is censure, disapproval. Avigeeti is the opposite of it and therefore means approval and praise. If there is one treatise on matters of spirit which has always found, is finding now, and which will ever find, universal approval, approbation, and adoption,—it is undoubtedly the Bhagavat Geeta. If we remember that into almost every language now prevalent in the world, the Geeta has been and is being translated, Desika's words ' Vipaschit-avigeetaya ' would almost appear to be prophetic.

By such a Geeta, the world has been able to discard darkness and ignorance, and revel in light and knowledge. And that is the achievement of Daya Devi. As already indicated the dispelling of darkness is what was really wrought by Daya in and by her bringing the Lord into this world as Lord Sri Krishna.

वृषाद्रिहयसादिनः प्रबलदोर्मरुत्प्रङ्खित-
स्त्विषा स्फुटतटिद्गुणस्त्वदवसेकसंस्कारवान् ।
करिष्यति दये कलिप्रबलघर्मनिर्मूलनः
पुनः कृतयुगाङ्कुरं भुवि कृपाणधाराधरः ॥ (९०)

Vrishaadrihayasaadinah prabaladormarutprenkhitas-
tvishaa sphutatatidgunas-tvadavasekasamskaaravaan ।
Karishyati Daye! kaliprabalagharmanirmoolanah
punah Kritayugaankuram Bhuvi kripaana dhaaraadharaha ॥ (90)

Daya Devi! The cloud that is the Sword in the hand of the Horse-rider of Vrishadri, swung vigorously by the quick movements of the mighty hand, having the brightness of lightning, purified and polished by being dipped in you, and capable of dispelling the strong and excessive heat engendered by Kaliyuga, is sure to establish in the earth the sprouts that will again bring in the Krita Yuga.

Krishnaavatara is the last of the incarnations that the Lord has assumed up till now. It is said that at the end of this Kali-yuga, the Lord will come into the world once again as a mighty warrior riding a horse and holding a sword or sabre in his hand with which to mow down evil and evil-minded men. That avatar is referred to as the Kalki avatar and is sung about by all the puranas. Jaya Deva in his celebrated Geeta Govindam sings about it thus:

म्लेच्छनिवहनिधने कलयसि करवालं
धूमकेतुमिव किमपि करालं
केशवधृतकल्किशरीरं जय जगदीश हरे

Karavaalam means a sword and Desika has sung in this sloka about the same sword of Kalki calling it by another name *Kripaana* That sword is compared to a cloud, Kripaana-dhaaradharaha— the sword which is a cloud.

The clouds are made to go hither and thither by the winds. The sword in the hand of Kalki is swung about by the force of the movements of the arm which holds it.

The clouds are frequently lit up by lightning. The sword is so bright that with every movement its lustre simply dazzles.

The clouds are well filled with water from the seas. The sword is well equipped (Samskaaravaan) for its task by being dipped (avaseka) in Daya..

The clouds dispel heat. This sword is going to do away with all the great and mighty forces of evil inflicting harm and distress upon the world in this Kali age. And just as the cloud by its showers helps crops, shrubs, plants and trees to sprout, this sword is going to pave the way for, and establish, the beginnings of the next yuga, the Krita Yuga. Just as useless forests are destroyed and in their place helpful and useful crops are reared, the Sword of Kalki Bhagavan will destroy this evil-saturated world and in its place start a new world based on dharma.

The word Kalki does not find mention here, as indeed the names of several avatars did not in the preceding slokas. But reference is made to Vrishaadri-hayasaadina or the equestrian of Vrishachala—Lord Srinivasa,—and it is the sword in His hand that is going to work havoc with the world at the end of this Yuga. and set the stage ready for the ushering in of Kritayuga. This is possible because that sword is dipped in Daya, and Daya always works for the benefit of humanity.

The decad started with the spread of Kalamegha (black cloud) in this world, and ends with daaradharaha also meaning cloud. There is no other object which reflects Daya Devi's selflessness and plentiful giving except the clouds; and that probably explains why the Lord has lent His own colour to the clouds.

श्रीमते निगमान्तमहादेशिकाय नमः

श्री श्रीनिवास परब्रह्मणे नमः

॥ दयाशतकम् ॥

DAYAA SATAKAM

TENTH DECAD.

AFTER having dealt with the greatness and glory of Daya in 90 slokas, the poet remembers about himself and the benefits he is to obtain for himself from Daya Devi. Readers would have noticed how in the course of those 90 slokas except on very few occasions, such as in slokas 12, 30 and 60, the poet had never prayed for himself. A contemplation of one's own loneliness is bound to come while one is dwelling upon the exalted nature of Daya. We have already seen that *Kaarpanya*, or the helplessness of the individual soul without the aid of Daya, is a chief factor to be taken note of by one resorting to prapatti. Impelled by these and other similar reasons Vedanta Desika in this, the closing decad of this glorious stotra, refers to his sinful propensities and to his dire state of helplessness, and makes a pathetic appeal to Daya Devi to come to his rescue and to help him attain Mokshananda.

It is but natural for any one who has for a time looked up at the glories of God and His greatness, to be seized with a sense of revulsion when one turns to one's own self. Alavandar, for instance, in his Stotra Ratna revels in the enjoyment of the great Lord in several slokas. When he thinks of himself after all that, he is seized with a sense of disgust which finds expression in the following words: " Dhig asuchim avineetam nirdayam maam alajjam " धिगशुचिं अविनीतं निर्दयं मां अलज्जं (Fie on me, the impure, the respectless, the compassionless, and the shame-less being.) And he actually apologises for pretending to desire to attain God who has eluded great persons like Sanaka and Sanandana. In that same strain Vedanta Desika describes in this decad his dire and deplorable state and pathetically appeals to Daya for help and succour.

The depression in the poet's mind as he thinks of his pitiable state is reflected in the metre employed in this decad. Whereas from the fourth decad onward, metres with 15 and 17 syllables were handled by the poet, in this, the metre shrinks to a 14-syllabled one. It is known variously as *Vasanta-tilaka*, *simmonnata*, and *udhdharshinee*. Many other stotras of Desika like Varadaraja Panchasat, Devanayaka Panchasat and Goda Stuti are in the main composed in this metre. The topic of this decad is *Satpadarvyaam Sahaayaha* सत्पदव्यां सहाय: or help along the right path.

विश्वोपकारमिति नाम सदा दुहाना-
मद्यापि देवि भवतीमवधीरयन्तम् ।
नाथे निवेशय वृषाद्रिपतौ दये त्वं
न्यस्तस्वरक्षणभरं त्वयि मां त्वयैव ॥ (९१)

Visvopakaaram iti naama sadaa duhaanaam
adyaapi Devi! bhavateem avadheerayantam ।
Naathe nivesaya Vrishaadripatau-Daye! tvam
nyasthasvarakshanabharam tvayi maam tvayaiva ॥ (91)

Devi! Daya of the Lord of Vrishagiri! In regard to you, who thus (in this wise) always yields all benefits (to one and all), I have even now nothing but indifference and disrespect; yet, having of your own accord accepted and taken up the burden of protecting me, you yourself please place me in the Lord.

Iti naama—इति नाम—In this wise. This expression is intended to take in all the qualities of Daya enjoyed in the previous nine decads.

In this wise, you yield the milk of world-wide help (Visvopakaaram). Visvopakara may also be taken to mean all sorts and kind of helps and aids to the men and women of the world.

Duhaanaam is a beautiful word. It means yielding milk like a cow. A cow will yield milk when it is milked. It will also yield to feed its calf. Sometimes it yields of its own accord, when overpowered by love and affection towards its calf which is not by its side. Andal in her Tiruppavai (12) enjoys the last of the above three forms of yielding milk, when she sings " கன்றுக் கிர

ங்கி நினைத்து முலைவழியே நின்று பால் சோர" (pouring milk in plenty through its teats at the mere loving thought of its calf.) This is a most appropriate and fitting description of the way Daya Devi yields milk to save us, her young ones. We do not even think of her, we even slight her. She does not mind. She makes us think,—then herself thinks for us, and blesses us. தாய் நினைந்த கன்றே ஒக்க என்னையும் தன்னையே நினைக்கச் செய்து, தான் எனக்காய் நினைந்து அருள்செய்யும். This is Tirumangai Alwar's beautiful description of the process of protection extended to us. Like a calf thinking of its mother cow, (or like the calf fondly thought of by the mother cow) we are made to think of the Lord, and even thereafter, as we cannot know what is for our welfare and what is not, the Lord thinks for us, just like a mother (தாயினும் சாலப்பரிந்து with a love and affection exceeding even that of a fond mother, as Manickavachaka Swamigal has put it) and showers His Grace on us. All these fine sentiments are suggested by the reference to the yielding of milk= *duhaanaam*.

Dohana or milking may in this context be understood as not only as yielding milk, but also milking. Visvopakaaram duhaanaam may be understood to indicate the process by which Daya Devi makes the Lord yield those several benefits. There is a saying that all the Upanishads are cows, Lord Krishna the Gopa is the *dogdha* (दोग्धा) (the milker), and the Geeta the milk yielded by those cows for the benefit of the learned, Arjuna being the calf utilised for such milking. Here Desika seems to go a step further and make the Gopa (Krishna) Himself a cow. Daya Devi milks Him, and the milk that flows from the Lord is the Viswopakaram with which the sloka begins.

How should such as I regard such as you? with love, affection reverence, and gratitude. But as a matter of fact, what is my attitude towards you? *Avadheerayantam maam* अवधीरयन्तं माम् have no regard for you. I have no respect for you. I neglect you. *Adhyaapi* अद्यापि Even now. Even now,—even after I have learnt about your greatness, goodness, and glory, as can be seen from the previous slokas sung by me. To know about you is one thing. To adore you is another thing. I have undertood your greatness; but I have not yet found it in my mind to worship you, to revere you, and to look up to you as my sole saviour.

A very great truth is sought to be brought home to us all by this *anusandhana* of Desika about himself. Knowing is one thing. Realising is another. Duryodhana is said to have exclaimed once, "I know what is dharma; but I am not able to adopt it. I know what is adharma; but I am not able to wean myself away from it." जानामि धर्मँ न च मे प्रवृत्तिः जानाम्यधर्मँ न च मे निवृत्तिः. Nammalwar has sung இவையன்றே நல்ல; இவையன்றே தீய; இவையென்று இவை அறிவனேலும், இவையெல்லாம் என்னால் அடைப்பு நீக்கொணாது இறையவனே! என்னால் செயற்பாலதென். (All these are good; all these are bad. I know what is good and what is bad: but I am unable to annex the good, and reject the bad. My Lord! O! what is it that I can do?)

This is the state with most of us. We know there is a God. We believe in Him and His power and mercy. Still we are not able to give ourselves up to Him in thought word and deed. This plight of almost all modern men is pointed out here. Note the use of the word अद्यापि—still, even now.

The *api* अपि may also be taken with भवतीं Bhavateem. Bhavateem api. Even such a one as you, I regard with disrespect. You can judge of me from this.

Notwithstanding this state of mind, I beseech you, says the latter half of the sloka, please place me in the Lord. *Nuathe nivesaya* नाथे निवेशय

You may well ask, how dare I make any request to you in this my unbending frame of mind? My only excuse is that having on your own initiative, and even without my asking, taken up the burden of protecting me, it is up to you alone to do what all is needed for my protection. By you (त्वया) Rakshana-bhara or burden of my protection has been placed in you त्वयि. Therefore you त्वं please place me in the Lord.

The "eva" एव occurring at the very end of the sloka has to be taken not only with the *tvaya* with which it is there linked, but with the *tvam* and the *tvayi* that precede it in the second half of the sloka.

By you only, in you alone, my protective burden has been placed. So you alone have to complete my protection by placing me in the Lord.

नाथे निवेशय Place me in the Lord. Whose Lord? My Lord, your Lord, the Lord of Vrishadri.

नैसर्गिकेण तरसा करुणे नियुक्ता
निम्नेतरेऽपि मयि ते विततिर्यदि स्यात् ।
विस्मापयेद्वृषगिरीश्वरमप्यवार्या
वेलातिलङ्घनदशेव महाम्बुराशेः ॥ (९२)

Naisargikena tarasaa Karune! niyuktaa
nimnetare api mayi te vitatir-yadi syaat ।
Vismaapayet Vrishagireesvaram apyavaaryaa
velaatilanghanadaseva mahaamburasehe ॥ (92)

Devi Karuna! If only your (water) spread, commanded thereunto by your innate speed, should swallow me up, me seated on high (ensconced in my own unbending haughtiness), it will cause surprise and astonishment even to the Lord of Vrishagiri, as being as incapable of being warded off as the mighty ocean bursting its shores.

In sloka 13 ante, Daya was praised as being capable of immersing the high-placed Lord Himself. But here I am, Desika says, perched on (what I think to be) even a higher pedestal than Lord Srinivasa Himself. Though I am in truth and fact a very low and powerless person, I, out of my egotism think that I am a very lofty (nimnetara) निम्नेतर person. If therefore the swift current of Daya rises above me and swallows me up by submerging me, then Lord Srinivasa will be very much surprised. Daya would have achieved what the Lord tried but failed to achieve, namely make me realise that I am subordinate to Him and not higher, as, in my thoughtlessness and impertinence, I was reckoning. Whenever He out of His infinite pity for me sought to reclaim me by saying Tvam-me त्वं मे (Thou art mine), I have always unhestitatingly rejoined अहं मे Aham-me—I belong to myself. Instead of bowing to Him saying जितंते पुण्डरीकाक्ष नमस्ते विश्वभावन, I am conquered by Thee and I make prostrations before Thee, I only exclaim ननमेयंतु कस्यचित् (I will not bow my head to any one.) Carrying my head aloft, and puffed up with stupid pride, I thought I was above the Lord Himself.

If therefore my pride is humbled and I am immersed in the वितति (waterspread) of Daya by her own spontaneous, natural, and innate force, the first person to be astonished at such an act will be the Lord Himself. He will be reminded of the state of pralaya in which the mighty seas will break their shores and mingle with force as described in sloka 61. He will surely feel glad and happy at Daya's achievement in swallowing me up with all my puffed up pride and egotism.

Water can only flow from high to low. But you flow up and immerse plateaus and hills. Who will not wonder at it?

विज्ञातशासनगतिर्विपरीतवृत्त्या
वृत्रादिभिः परिचितां पदवीं भजामि ।
एवंविधे वृषगिरीशदये मयि त्वं
दीने विभोः शमय दण्डधरत्वलीलाम् ॥ (९३)

Vignaatasasanagatir-vipareetavrittyaa
Vrittraadibhih parichitaam padaveem bhajaami ।
Evam vidhe Vrishagirieesa Daye! mayi tvam
deene vibhos-samaya dandadharatvaleelaam ॥ (93)

Daya of the Lord of Vrishagiri! Knowing as I do the way of the commands (Shastras), I still pursue with pleasure the paths pursued by Vritrasura and his ilk. (I pray to you) you please put down the Lord's punishing sport, that is sure to be directed against poor me with this evil propensity.

This decad is intended to demonstrate the help of Daya in Satpadavi सत्पदवी or the proper path. This sloka talks of the विपरीतपदवी Vipareetapadavi or the wrong and dangerous path that most of us are treading here with disastrous results to ourselves. The worst of it is we follow in the wrong path not out of ignorance but of sheer cussedness. This aspect is indicated by the opening words of the sloka: Vignana-sasana-gatihi विज्ञानशासनगतिः *Sasana* is Command. Saasanaat Saastram शासनात् शास्त्रं—Because it commands, it is known as Sastra. I am aware of it. That is, to say I know what are the dictates of that Shastra. I know its Do's and Don'ts. But I invariably don't do what I ought to do and never fail to do hundreds of times what I have been ordained not to do. निन्दिताचार करणं निवृत्तं कृत्यकर्मणः and I thus resemble Vritrasura and others like him such as Hiranya and Ravana. All of them were fully aware of the error in the path they were pursuing, but still they clung to their wrong path steadfastly, even though they were advised against following such sinful conduct. As Seeta Devi pointed out to Ravana

इह सन्तो न वा सन्ति सतो वा नानुवर्तसे ।
तथा हि विपरीता ते बुद्धिराचारवर्जित ॥

(Vipareeta buddhi) Perverse knowledge, and (vipareeta achara) perverse conduct result from failure to take the advice of saintly souls. The word 'vipareeta' used in this sloka of Daya Sataka reminds us of the above-cited sloka of the Ramayana.

Such a conduct invites the terrible punishments prescribed therefor. The punisher is of course the great Lord who has behind Him the strength of his sixfold gunaas, known as gnana, bala, aiswarya, veerya, sakthi and tejas—vide slokas 11 and 15 ante. When I think of the punishments that the Lord is sure to inflict on me, I shudder with fright. Punishment is the sport of the Lord who for his Jagatvyapaara जगत्व्यापार (maintenance of the world) has laid down rules of human conduct. The Shastraas are nothing but the rules and regulations by which men and women of this world have to guide themselves. When they fail to do so, they invite the wrath of the Lord, and in the same way in which He brought the world into being, He punishes the wrong doers. The word punishment is here denoted by the word 'dandadharatvaleela.' दण्डधरत्वलीला *Danda* is the stick used to beat by way of chatisement. The wielding of the stick or the cane is therefore symbolic of punishment. Shuddering at the thought of the punishment that I am going to receive at the hands of the Lord, I appeal to you to protect me from the same. I am a very low and helpless person who have realised the atrocities of my acts only after I have committed them. Now I appeal to you to protect me, since my evil acts are now ripe enough to get me punished for them. Please use your good offices and see that the punishing tendency of the Lord is quelled. Inspite of the fact that I am this bad एवंविधे I take courage and approach you, because you have very kindly taken upon yourself the great task,—a difficult task in fact—साहस—Saahasa of protecting me. That Daya Devi can cleverly and successfully avert punishments intended for the wrong-doers has been stated in several of the earlier slokas. This appeal to Daya Devi issues from the frightened heart of the wrong doer.

The prayer of Desika and the other great Acharyas like him in words such as those employed in this sloka are really intended for men and women like us. In fact it is most appropriate only for us.

मासाहसोक्तिघनकञ्चुकवञ्चितान्यः
पश्यत्सु तेषु विदधाम्यतिसाहसानि ।
पद्मासहायकरुणे न रुणत्सि किं त्वं
घोरं कुलिङ्गशकुनेरिव चेष्टितं मे ॥ (९४)

Maa saahasoktighanakanchukavanchittanyah
pasyatsu teshu vidadhaamyatisaahasaani ।
Padmasahaaya Karune! na runatsi kim tvam
ghoram kulingasakuner-iva cheshtitam me ॥ (94)

Devi Karuna of Srinivasa! putting on a strong armour (covering) constituted by the words "do not be rash" in order to cheat the rest of the world, I myself daringly commit several rash acts before the very eyes of the persons whom I cheat by my external deportment. How is it you do not prevent this kind of behaviour on my part, which resembles the conduct of the kulinga bird?

In the previous sloka the poet sung about the knowingly committed transgressions of Shastric commands. Here he goes one step further. Not only do I act against the Sastras, but I act even against my own words. I preach one thing and practise another. In order to impress upon those who come to me for instruction and look up to me for guidance, I say "don't be rash in your acts." "Always act in such a way as to respect the Shastric injunctions which you must never dream of going against." This is for their consumption, so that they may think that I am a very good Acharya, and a very great and noble person. Having cheated them thus into believing in my greatness, even before their very eyes I myself act contrary to that very upadesa or teaching, and commit several rash acts.

Kanchuka कञ्चुक is a coat, or cover, ghanakanchuka घनकञ्चुक is a thick coat, almost like an armour. My upadesa or teaching "मा साहसं कुरु" (don't commit any rash or sinful act) is the external covering which conceals my real and true nature. Just like the tiger donning the garb of a cow, I cover myself with a thick coat of goodness, and make people believe that I am good, while in fact I am not. I have not the patience to wait till my disciples, to whom I give this advice, leave my presence. Even while they are looking on, I commit the very misdeeds against which I warn them.

The poet refers to a bird called *kulinga*. It is said that the sound which emanates from the throat of the bird very much resembles the sound of "maa saahasa." Even while uttering that sound, it is said, the bird will insert its beak into the mouth of the yawning lion to pluck a bit of flesh sticking in the lion's teeth. That particular bird has been defined in Sanskrit literature thus:

कुलिङ्ग शकुनिर्नाम हरेर्दारितदन्तिनः ।
मुखादामिषमादत्ते वदन् मा साहसं कुरु ॥

The poet asks Daya Devi in this sloka to see that such conduct or behaviour on his part is eschewed by him and put away for ever. How is it that having taken upon yourself the burden of protecting me, you still permit this sort of behaviour on my part? It is up to you and you alone to put an end to my committing atrocities against which I warn others.

Reading the previous sloka and this together, it looks as if Desika is again emphasising the need for good conduct especially in the post-prapatti period. The observance of prapatti is an indication of cessation of the commission of sin. Prathikulyavarjana. In view of the determination not to swerve from the Sastraic path taken on the occasion of prapatti, the person resolves not to commit evil deeds thereafter. In order to ensure that no evil deeds are committed, Desika appeals to Daya Devi in this sloka to see that this tendency to go against his own expressed wish of not transgressing the Lord's laws is curbed.

Incidentally Desika indicates one of the chief characterestics that ought to be present in every Acharya. He must act according to his own upadesa. If he does not, he will resemble the kulinga jbird. Elsewhere also Desika refers to a true Acharya as குலிங்க சகுனி விருத்தாந்த வைதேசிகனை ஆசாரியன் that is, one who is far removed from the conduct of the *kulinga* bird. Being an Acharya of great repute himself, Vedanta Desika here gives a tip to all who are desirous of being Acharyas imparting instruction to, and enforcing rules of conduct in, their disciples.

विक्षेपमर्हसि दये विपलायितेऽपि
व्याजं विभाव्य वृषशैलपतेर्विहारम् ।
स्वाधीनसत्त्वसरणिः स्वयमत्र जन्तौ
द्राघीयसी दृढतरा गुणवागुरा त्वम् ॥ (९५)

Vikshepam arhasi Daya! vipalaayite api
vyaajam vibhaavya Vrishasailapater-vihaaram ।
Svaadheena satva saranis-svayam atra jantau
draagheeyasee dridhataraa gunavaaguraa tvam ॥ (95)

Daya Devi! however much I may try to run away (from you), you must capture me in the guise of providing shikar for the Lord oi Vrishachala. You are well aware of the paths in which beings (animals) are likely to wander. Therefore, you please of your own accord spread yourself so as to enmesh this being in your net which is long, strong, and made of ropes (strings).

In this sloka Desika requests Daya Devi to catch him unawares. He likens Daya Devi to a long and sturdy net. The hunter who spreads this net is of course Lord Srinivasa. Daya is His net which he spreads far and wide in order to catch animals during His shikar, or hunting sport, in which kings very often indulge. The net has to be spread only in places which animals are likely to frequent, so that when they come to the spot they get entangled and thereby get caught. Daya Devi is here described as possessing the requisite knowledge of places frequented by animals, by the expression" Svaadheena Satva-sarani. Satva refers to beings; सरणि sarani to the pathways they frequent. सत्व सरणि Satva sarani can also be taken to mean the right path, the satvic path. We are reminded once again of the topic of this decad, that is Satpadavyam Sahaaya or helping in putting one, or taking one, on the right path. The net *Vaagura* वागुर which has to be spread far and wide is referred to as very long, draagheeyasi, long enough to catch the swiftest runner; and very strong—dridhataraa, no one once caught in it can escape from it; and as made up of guna, strings or ropes. Guna of course also means attribute. You must catch me by your gunas and loveableness, seems to be the hidden suggestion. Readers will notice how the poet refers to himself here as a jantu,–an animal, ust a being. Naichyanusandhaana or recounting one's own lowliness cannot go further. It it only when this sentiment takes hold of one, that Daya Devi relents. She cannot be cheated by mere words. She looks to the feelings in the heart.

Casting nets and catching animals—this is the sport of kings. The desire on the part of the Lord of Vrishadri to indulge in shikar—sport—is to be made a pretence to cast this net of Daya far and wide. Vyaajam vibhaavya—व्याजं विभाव्य—very well brings out this idea of indulging in a pretence of sport in order to achieve His desire to divinise human beings. There is no one who can be employed with better effect in this divinising process than Daya Devi, and more persons are likely to be caught in the net of Daya than in other nets. The Lord has wonderful beauty. He is known as Bhuvanasundara–भुवनसुन्दर —but we human beings fail to be attracted by that beauty. He is a storehouse of auspicious qualities. They do not appeal to us. Daya Devi alone has the capacity by her goodness and cleverness to catch us unawares, and that is why the analogy of the net is indulged in by Desika in this sloka to describe one more characteristic greatness of Daya Devi.

संतन्यमानमपराधगणं विचिन्त्य
त्रस्यामि हन्त भवतीं च विभावयामि ।
अह्नाय मे वृषगिरीशदये जहीमा-
माशीविषग्रहणकेळिनिभामवस्थाम् ॥ (९६)

Santanyamaanam aparaadhaganam vichintya
trasyaami hanta bhavateem cha vibhaavayaami ।
Ahnaaya me vrishagireesa Daye! Jaheemaam
aaseevishagrahana kelinibhaam avasthaam ॥ (96)

Daya of the Lord of Vrishagiri! when I think of the multitude of my sins that are ever on the increase, I simply shudder. And (at once) I also think of you. Alas! Please quickly put an end to this (pitiable) state of mine,—very much like catching hold of, and playing with, a terribly poisonous serpent.

Slowly, it is being revealed, the poet's respect for Daya is growing. He has implored her to place him in the Lord. (91) to avert punishments that the Lord may inflict (93) and to catch him unwares as in a net (95). (Rama was sent by Seeta to catch a deer for her. He was not able to. But Daya is able to catch any number for her Lord).

In this sloka, the poet speaks about his inability to shake off his sinning propensities, in spite of his appeals to Daya Devi for help and redress. A man learns Garuda Mantra in order to drive away by its utterance the poisonous effects of a serpent-bite. But having learnt that Mantra which is an antidote to serpent-poison, he thinks of playing with serpents by catching them, and, if in that process he is stung by the serpent, uttering the mantra to get rid of the deadly effect of that poison. I am now, says Desika in this sloka, very much like such a man. Before that man learnt the Garuda Mantra he was afraid of snakes. but the very fact of his having attained *siddhi* in Garuda mantra emboldened him to go to snake-infested areas, and try to catch hold of them and play with them. So too I am now prone to multiply my sins relying on Daya to save me from their evil effects. Truly an unenviable position! That is why it has evoked a Hanta हन्त, (Alas) from the poet's mouth.

Quickly end this wretched plight of mine is the prayer, Ahnaaya jahi (अह्नाय - जहि), that arises in the heart of the poet. The proximity of the word Ahnaaya with Vibhaavayaami (विभावयामि) suggests that those two words may be taken together so as to indicate how quickly I think of you Daya, when I am confronted with my mounting sins.

Imaam avasthaam (इमां अवस्थां)—This plight. It has to be seen to be understood fully, and cannot be adequately or properly described. So dire and deplorable a state. This reminds one of Nammalwar's இந்நின்ற நீர்மை (This plight).

This sloka appears to be a poetic elaboration of the sentiment contained in the 8th sloka of Nyaasa Dasaka which runs as follows:

त्वदेकरक्षस्य मम त्वमेव करुणाकर ।
न प्रवर्तय पापानि प्रवृत्तानि निवर्तय ॥

O Lord! full of Karuna! please see to it that my sins (which are likely to pave the way for the commission of more sins) do not get activated (begin to function). And pray! you yourself prevent those that have begun to act (by neutralising them).

If there is one point that Desika is anxious to drive home, it is the great need for avoiding the commission of sins, especially after the performance of Prapatti.

औत्सुक्यपूर्वमुपहृत्य महापराधान्
मातः प्रसादयितुमिच्छति मे मनस्त्वाम् ।
आलिह्य तान्निरवशेषमलब्धतृप्ति-
स्ताम्यस्यहो वृषगिरीशधृता दये त्वम् ॥ (९७)

Autsukya poorvam upahritya mahaaparaadhaan
maatah! prasaadayitum ichchhati me manas-tvaam ।
Alihya taan niravasesham alabdhatriptis-
taamyas-yaho! Vrishagirieesadhritaa Daye! tvam ॥ (97)

Mother mine! Daya Devi! My mind (thus) exultingly submits my enormous and untold sins as an offering unto you, and thereby desires to please and satisfy you; you who are supported by the Lord of Vrishagiri lick them all up leaving nothing behind, and without being satisfied (thereby) feel famished. What a wonder!

As a return for all the kindness and consideration that you extend towards me, and the great and invaluable help you render to me by getting me pardoned of all my sins and crimes, what is it I can offer to you, Daya! Why, nothing but those very sins and crimes. My mind thinks of doing something by way of pleasing you (prasaadayitum). Knowing your propensity to annihilate sins, my mind at once hits upon placing those very sins as offerings to you. Knowing as it does the immensity of those sins committed by me, my mind naturally feels elated at the opportunity it is availing itself of, of offering them all to you,—such a big *naivedya* (oblation). Its elation or pleasure at the thought of placing a full and rich repast before you, is however very short-lived.

For, as soon as that frightfully large and heavy load of sins is offered to Daya, she licks them all up,—laps up the whole lot without leaving even a faint trace, and appears to want more. What she has taken, instead of appeasing her appetite and hunger, has only helped to whet that appetite, with the result that she now looks positively hungry and famished. One is inescapably made to wonder at this, and exclaim ' Aho ' अहो.

For all that the Lord and Daya Devi do to help us, what is it that we can think of doing or giving by way of recompense? Nammalwar exclaims: அறியேன் ஒருகைம்மாறே. (I am not able to think of any return or recompense). Alavandar cries out in an equally helpless frame of mind Kinnu-samarpayaami te—(किन्नु समर्पयामि ते) What is it that I can offer to you (in return)?—The same sentiment overpowers Desika here and he gives expression to it in his own inimitable way. Daya Devi takes a pleasure in getting us freed from our sins. This is poetically referred to as sins being eaten up by Daya Devi, consumed. All the worlds were destroyed by the Lord in pralaya. He is said to have eaten those worlds: உண்டது உலகேழும் உள்ளொடுங்க. Similarly

Daya is said to eat or devour the sins of her votaries or devotees. That act of grace is beyond repayment. That she does not look forward to any recompense is only too patent. That is nicely expressed by saying she takes a pleasure in killing and devouring our sins, and the pleasure she derives is the only benefit she gets out of it. The words " Aalihya taan niravasesham alabdhatriptihi " indicate the extreme pleasure that Daya Devi derives in the process of the annihilation of sins. Sweet things like honey are not gulped but are licked and lazily tasted by the tongue. " Aalihya " meaning licking, has been specially used here to denote how tasteful the pardoning of sins is to Daya Devi. " Niravasesham " shows, without leaving a bit, drop or fragment, and confirms the tastefulness. Even then it does not satiate. Daya hankers for more as shown by the word " alabdhatripti " not satisfied.

It is easy to miss the poetic imagery employed in this sloka, to take the words literally, and to conclude that Desika is here putting a premium on sins and sinfulness, and lays down that to please Daya one must never stop committing sins. Nothing can be farther from the mind of that great Acharya than that sin in man is a qualification for God's mercy descending on him.

Maataha! मातः Mother! is the vocative in the first half of the sloka, wherein the tendency of the human mind to placate and please Daya Devi by the offering of sins is referred to. That intimate relationship emboldens one to think in that strain. Daye! is the second vocative in this sloka and occurs in the second half referring to Daya Devi's capacity to forgive all sins—however heinous. For is she not a Daya having the support of the Lord of Vrishagiri. Vrishagireesa dhrita Daye!

Readers will have reminded themselves of the sentiment given expression to in Sloka 29 ante, *viz.*, " By ignoring me and protecting small sinners, you, Daya, will not obtain a sense of fulness or satisfaction or appeasement of hunger. I am sorry for you "—was what was said there. That struck a note personal to the poet. But in this 97th sloka the poet emphasises the power of Daya to pardon all sins—however numerous and however heinous—and therefore no one need feel that he has sinned that much which is beyond Daya's pardoning capacity. This is one aspect of Maha Viswasa, or the great faith, which assures us that however much we might have sinned in the past, the moment we regret and unreservedly place ourselves in the hands of the Lord's protecting grace, we are sure to be saved.

जह्याद्वृषाचलपतिः प्रतिघेऽपि न त्वां
घर्मोपतप्त इव शीतलतामुदन्वान् ।
सा मामरुन्तुदभरन्यसनानुवृत्ति-
स्तद्वीक्षणैः स्पृश दये तव केलिपद्मैः ॥ (९८)

Jahyaad Vrishaachalapatih-pratighepi na tvaam
gharmopatapta iva seetalataam udanvaan ।
Saa mam aruntudabharanyasanaanuvrittis-
tad-veekshanais-sprisa Daye! tava kelipadmaihi ॥ (98)

Daya Devi! However much the Lord of Vrishachala may get angry (at me), He is not capable of giving you up—even like the ocean which is unable to discard its inherent coolness even in the hottest summer. You in turn are so minded that a repetition of prapatti (surrender unto you) is very wounding to you. I therefore beseech you, please let the lovely glances of His (Srinivasa's), which are your sportive lotuses, touch me (fall on me).

This sloka can be said to contain the final prayer of Vedanta Desika in this stotra. He wants to be the recipient of the Lord's protective glances (kataaksha). While dealing with slokas 49 and 50, we had occasion to recapitulate the kataakshas that mark the several stages in the spiritual progress of the human soul. That series of kataakshaas winds up with the kataaksha or veekshana sung in this sloka. It is the one which secures ultimate beatitude to the individual soul. Slokas 99 and 100 that follow merely describe the form that the poet desires that beatitude to take.

As if to explain why all these ages on ages that have passed, the upaasaka, who has now sought Daya's intervention, was left to suffer in samsaara, the poet refers to the anger of the Lord, an anger roused by his sins. At once Desika reminds himself of Daya's hold on that Lord. He is incapable of giving up Daya. Daya is inherent in Him. She is of His very nature. just like coolness is of the ocean (sloka 23 ante). Even when it is 50 degrees centigrade (122 degrees F) in the shade, on land, the waters of the sea are cool. As the sea is incapable of giving up its coolness, the Lord is incapable of giving up Daya. The sloka starts with this assuring fact,—so helpful to us all.

The next idea is about Daya's readiness to help. For one prapatti—prapatti once done—(vide "Sakrid-eve-prapannaaya" of the Ramayana) Daya unreservedly promises her full help and cooperation in obtaining for us from the Lord what we want of Him *viz.*, moksha. The very idea of a second prapatti or repetition (anuvritti) of the process of surrender is so repulsive to Daya. It is like a sharp stab straight into her sweet and good heart—so wounding to her (aruntuda).

The Lord is placated by our invoking Daya. Daya has been placated by our surrender to her. Then what remains? Nothing but the realisation of the final beatitude. Then why tarry? Pray let the glances of the Lord play on me. This glance, the present one, is not a step towards mukti, but is mukti-conferring. Let me have it, prays Desika. The close connection between the Lord's Kataksha and Daya has been referred to more than once before. In sloka 42 it was tvatparishvanga-dhanyaihi, glances blest by your close embrace,—in sloka 49, it was "Sakheem-te," glances which are fond and close confidante (bosom friend) of Daya. Here they are Daya's Keli padmas or lotuses with which Daya Devi fondly plays.

Sprusa-touch, Touch me with those glances of the Lord. That is to say make me the recipient of those glances. Bathed in the effulgence of those loving glances of the Lord, I shall become freed from Samsara and become a full-fledged Mukta.

दृष्टेऽपि दुर्बलधियं दमनेऽपि दृप्तं
स्नात्वापि धूलिरसिकं भजनेऽपि भीमम् ।
बध्वा गृहाण वृषशैलपतेर्दये मां
त्वद्वारणं स्वयमनुग्रहशृङ्खलाभिः ॥ (९९)

Drishte-api durbala dhiyam damanepi driptam
snaatvaapi dhoolirasikam bhajanepi bheemam ।
Baddhwaa grihaana Vrishasailapater Daye maam
tvad vaaranam svayam anugrahasrinkhalaabhihi ॥ (99)

Daya of Vrishachalapati! Pray, bind me, your elephant, with the chains of your anugraha (favour) and capture me. I resemble an elephant because my intellect is weak even in regard to objects fully seen and comprehended. I am full of uncontrollable force and vigour even when controlled. I am very fond of, and take to,

dirt and dust, the moment I emerge from a bath; and I am frightful even when placated.

Having become the recipient of the Lord's kataksha by the goodness of Daya Devi, Desika now prays to Daya to chain him up and capture him so that he can no more be what he was in the past. By four very nice and suggestive epithets he compares himself to an elephant and describes in a nutshell the proclivities of erring mankind.

(1) Drishte-api-durbala-dhiyam.

Man slides into error not because he is unable to see that it is an error. He sees well, and fully realises the situation in all its aspects, and yet does wrong because he has not the strength to avoid it and do good.

An elephant sees well the danger ahead of it; yet especially when it is in rut, it rushes forward because its mind is not strong enough to withhold it from danger.

(2) Damanepi-driptam.

Though sought to be tamed and subdued, acting in an uncontrolled and unrestrained way. How many elders in society, or at home, and how many good friends check us in our mad career of sin? Do we pay any heed? We think they are fools and old-day cronies, and that we know better, with the result that, haughty and turbulent. we rush into error.

The mahout does his best to prevent the elephant from running amok or going astray. The rash elephant does not obey his command and even when he pricks into its head by the *ankusa* (restraining hook or goad) it does not mind, but tries to throw him out and rush on in its rash career, uncontrollable.

(3) Snaatvaapi-dhuli-rasikam:

After a bath, having a taste for dirt. A very fitting description of the human taste for filth. In every human soul there appears to lurk a desire to descend low in thought, word and deed. Only a few have the courage to resist and withstand that desire. The rest simply succumb.

After over an hour's arduous time in water, the mahout rubbing the elephant clean, the moment the elephant gets out of water it takes hay, grass, and other rubbish nearby, and puts them on its own head and strews them over its body. Its taste for dirt is so strong.

(4) Bhajane api bheemam:

Frightful even when praised and placated. Tondaradippodi Alwar has sung about himself: சினத்தினால் செற்றம் நோக்கித் தீ விளி விளிவன்வாளா (angry at every one and everything, I look daggers at others, and shout at them as if spitting fire). No wonder every one is afraid of such a person. Sweet words intended to make him see reason, and climb down from the high altitude of great anger fall on deaf ears. Did Hiranya listen to the sweet words of his wife Kayaadu and his child Prahlada? Did Ravana pay heed to the words of praise lavished on him by Malyavaan and Vibheeshana calculated to wean him from his sinful path? So too, very often we discard the sweet and coaxing words of praise and flattery emanating from good persons, and remain terrible, frightful to look at. Valmiki's description of Ravana is well worth being recollected in this connection. In one place Ravana is referred to as Bhooshitopi Bhayankaraha. भूषितोऽपि भयंकर:

Oftentimes even a trained elephant, which is normally very submissive and obedient, flares up, and on those occasions however much the mahout may try to soften its temper by sweet words, it becomes frightful and gets out of hand. In that state it will be terrible to look at, a mass of fury.

The aforesaid four traits are all seen in me, as in the elephant, and therefore I am an elephant, says Desika. But I am now *your* elephant. Tvad-vaaranam. So please catch hold of me and hold me captive by your chains. An elephant does not easily get caught. It tries to prevent people from catching it. The words tvad vaaranam can also give this meaning, *viz.*, obstructing you, preventing you. Nevertheless capture me.

How? By the chains (srinkala) of anugraha. Anugraha means conferring a favour, rewarding. Your favour towards me should be the binding force chaining me.

Anu-graha can also mean catching up from behind, (the rear). I am not easily capturable. So please come from behind and catch me unawares by throwing the chains of your anugraha (favourableness) without my knowing it, without my seeing it. Desika seems to give tips to Daya Devi herself about how to capture him.

Baddhvaa-grihaana: Bind and capture.

Parasara Bhatta has employed the analogy of the elephant to describe Lord Ranganatha. In one verse of his Srirangaraja Stava he sings thus:

स्वं संस्कृत द्राविड वेदसूक्तैः भान्तं मदुक्तैः मलिनी करोति ।
श्रीरङ्गसद्मः कलभं क एव स्नात्वापि धूलीरसिकं निषेद्धा ॥

Lord Ranganatha, the majestic Elephant of Srirangam who shines in the Scriptures—Sanskrit and Tamil—makes himself dirty by accepting my words (in His praise). Who can prevent an elephant from indulging in its taste for dirt and rubbish soon after it has had a bath?

The same words Snaatvapi-dhuli-rasikam have been used more fittingly by Desika in this sloka to describe himself. In two other places in the course of his sweet stotras Desika again refers to himself as an elephant and his getting chained and bound. In the Bhagavat Dhyana Sopana, he sings about

दृप्ता सेयं दृढनियमिता रश्मिभिर्भूषणानाम्
चिन्ता हस्तिन्यनुभवति मे चित्रमालानयन्त्रम्

This mind of mine which is like an elephant, always proud and arrogant, (mad and wild), has been tied fast and tight to the two beautiful hands of Lord Ranganatha as to a tying post, by means of the shooting rays of the jewels adorning the Lord.

In the Yathiraja Saptati, the elephant-anology is again worked to perfection.

अविद्यारण्यानि कुहर विहरन्मामकमनः
प्रामाद्यन्मातङ्ग प्रथमनिगळं पादयुगळम्

Ramanuja's feet are there enjoyed as the *first* chain (pratama nigalam) that binds the mind of the poet which is like an elephant in rut, freely and playfully wandering about in the centre of the big forest of *avidya* or ignorance.

Ramanuja's feet (the acharya's feet) are the *first* chain. Daya is the *next* chain as enjoyed in this sloka. Once caught in the grip of the Acharyas, the soul is next caught (anu-graha) in Daya. And now it is caught for ever.

नातः परं किमपि मे त्वयि नाथनीयं
मातर्दये मयि कुरुष्व तथा प्रसादम् ।
बद्धादरो वृषगिरिप्रणयी यथाऽसौ
मुक्तानुभूतिमिह दास्यति मे मुकुन्दः ॥ (१००)

Naatahparam, kimapi me tvayi naathaneeyam
Maatar-Daye mayi kurushva tathaa prasaudam ।
Baddhaadaro Vrishagiripranayee yathaasau
Muktaanubhootim iha daasyati me Mukundaha. ॥ (100)

Mother Daya! Beyond this, that I am now going to pray of you, there is nothing that I desire. Kindly confer on me this boon, viz., that this Mukunda, who loves (His residence in Tiruvengada Hill) Vrishagiri, exhibits great love and affection towards me, and confers on me here the bliss that Celestials enjoy (in Vaikunta).

This is the 100th and last sloka of this stotra proper. There are eight more slokas but they are really in the form of an epilogue. The Sataka (centum) ends with this sloka.

After extolling Daya and her qualities in 90 slokas and after having sung 9 more slokas thereafter entreating Daya Devi to come to his help, Vedanta Desika makes known in this sloka to Daya Devi what it is that he desires most. That there is one desire in his heart more than any other which he wants Daya Devi to fulfil, is shown by the opening words of the sloka which say that beyond this there is nothing I desire to have from you. This is all that I seek of you and from you.

He calls Daya here as Maatar-daye! Mother Daya! It is a very sincere and earnest and intimate prayer—one that a child is prone to make to its fond mother.

Please confer it on me. Let it be your *prasadam*, favourable grant to me.

Please grant that this Lord, asau Mukundaha,—असौ मुकुन्दः this Mukunda, gives to me *Muktaanubhooti* मुक्तानुभूति here, इह Iha. He is a Mukunda, one who can confer the best of the here and hereafter, मु (mu) means final emancipation. कु (Ku) means the earth. It is because the Lord can confer on His votaries all the pleasures of moksha, as also all the pleasures of the earth, He is known as Mukunda. Here Desika co-ordinates the two pleasures and combines them into one and prays for it.

He asks for muktaanubhooti or the enjoyment of the emanci-ated souls,—muktas. But he wants to get that enjoyment here Iha) in this world. Where the Lord is, that is Vaikunta. The ord is now in this Virishagiri and He is here by choice. He oves the place so. He is *Vrishagiri pranayee*—a lover of Vrishagiri. his reminds us of the famous purana sloka.

मायावी परमानन्दं त्यक्त्वा वैकुण्ठमुत्तमम् ।
स्वामिपुष्करिणीतीरे रमया सह मोदते ॥

hat great Maayin (or Maayan *மாயன்* as Andal would have it) iscarding the great and glorious Vaikuntam revels along with is consort (Lakshmi), रमया सह Ramayaa Saha, on the banks of wami Pushkarini (the tank called Koneri in Tirumalai, next north f the shrine of Lord Srinivasa).

Then again He is a baddhaadhara बद्धादर: one who evinces eat solicitude for, and loves, the bound ones (embodied jeevas ho are born and who die and are re-born in this world). The ord baddhadhara can be taken with the verb *daasyati* and made mean, give with love towards me. But the meaning suggested rlier will be found to be more appropriate when set off against uktaanuboothi. In giving the bliss of Moksha to the Muktas, ere is no special point or merit. So too in giving that bliss in aikunta, there is nothing specially noteworthy. But to give uktaanubhooti to baddhas, and to give it here (Iha),—they will special and noteworthy features which normally He may not re to give, and will give only at behest of His beloved Daya Devi. erefore Desika makes it his heartfelt and earnest prayer to Daya at the Lord should vouchsafe that celestial bliss to him even ile on this earth.

The ancient Srutis have in places touched upon this state, ich can be referred as *jeevan mukti* in one sense (see commentary sloka 44 above); but by far the more numerous passages there er to an Utkranti,—a going up, to a different and higher world. e Tamil scriptures also touch upon the state of Mukti in Vaikunta d also in this world itself; but here the weightage is in favour mukti being attained and enjoyed here. Nammalwar, Andal d Thirumangai Alwar have made no secret of the fact that their te is not for the pleasures of Paramapada (Vaikunta) but for ng Muktas here. Their realisation is very beautifully and succin- summarised in a Tamil verse by Vedanta Desika:

விண்ணவர் வேண்டி விலக்கின்றி மேவும் அடிமையெல்லா
மண்ணுலகில் மகிழ்ந்து அடைகின்றனர் . . . . நம் பண்
மரும் தமிழ்வேதம் அறிந்த பகவர்களே.’’

All the pleasures that the Nityasooris derive in serving the Lor in Vaikunta, our little great ones of this world (சிறுமாமனிசர் who have learnt the Tamil Vedas, enjoy with delectation here o this earth itself. As a premier Dramida-Sakha-adhyayee (சந்தமி தமிழ் மறையோன்) Vedanta Desika therefore prays in thi sloka not for being taken to Vaikuntaloka but for being blesse with the bliss of Vaikunta here itself.

That this is not a mere casual or temporary or poetic mood o Desika’s part, but is his definite and deliberate longing, is show by his prayer to Lord Ranganatha and Lord Varadaraja elsewher In the Abheetistava in praise of Ranganatha, Desika desires t obtain in this world the enjoyment of the celestials of Parama pada. वयं त्रिदशनिर्वृतिं भुविमुकुन्द विन्देमहि (Note the use of the wor Mukunda here also). Addressing Varadaraja of Kanchi, Desik says if certain enjoyments are vouchsafed to him here, this eart will itself become Vaikunta संसारएष भगवन् अपवर्गं एव Samsar will itself become moksha.

Every prapanna, every true Vaishnavite who has imbibed th spirit of Ubhaya Vedanta will only pray thus. The desire to go t Vaikunta will not be his. The Lord however, may think othe wise, and in the fullness of time may take such a one to His ow Loka,—Vaikunta. That has nothing to do with the yearning the human heart. Note the मे in वैकुण्ठवासेपि नमेऽभिलाष:

By two very significant epithets used here to denote the Lor Desika justifies this craving of man to get all glories, pleasur and benefits here itself; பெறுவதெல்லாம் இங்கே நாம் பெற் வாழ. One is *Vrishagiri Pranayee*, and the other is *Baddhadharal* as referring to this Lord. The suggestion seems to be that whe the Lord Himself loves this place, and has great fondness for tl mortals here, why opt for something which will be contrary what He manifests? Will we not be rejecting His proferred har here, if we aspire for something far away, to give which He nee not have descended into this earth at all, as the Lord of Tiruve gadam.

Once again emphasis is laid on Archavatara whose greatne and glory run through this stotra from beginning to en

Vedanta Desika in line with the great Acharyas he follows, does 1ot subscribe to the view that the Archa or the image in Temple s a mere step towards the Infinite, a stepping stone to attain higher ltitudes of spirituality. To Desika the Archa is in itself the ?rimary God. To those who are not gifted enough to rise to)esika's heights and see the Highest Truth in Lord Srinivasa, he prayer made by him in this sloka may not mean much. But o those steeped in the Ubhaya Vedanta lore, synthesised and handed lown to posterity, by great Acharyas like Nathamunigal, Yamuna-harya and Ramanuja, Lord Srinivasa is Para Brahmam, nd enjoying Him here is Moksha. To them there is no prayer vorth making than the one contained in this sloka.

This sloka is the summit of this stotra, the hundredth of the ataka. Addressed to the Lord's Daya, it depicts the summit f human aspirations which lies in the enjoyment of beatitude vith the Lord who resides in the summit of Vrishagiri, and also 1 the summit of the srutis. श्रुति शिरसि विदीप्ते ब्रह्मणि श्रीनिवासे भवतु म परस्मिन् शेमुषी भक्तिरूपा Sruti-sirasi-Videepte-Brahmani-Srinivase-havathu-Mama Parasmin-Semushee-Baktiroopa, was Ramanuja's pening prayer voiced in the very first sloka of his Sri Bhashya. ollowing in his wake Vedanta Desika has equated Srinivasa with ara Brahmam, and Mokshananda with the enjoyment of that rahmam here.

निःसीमवैभवजुषां मिषतां गुणानां
स्तोतुर्दये वृषगिरीशगुणेश्वरीं त्वाम् ।
तैरेव नूनमवशैरभिनन्दितं मे
सत्यापितं तव बलादकुतोभयत्वम् ॥ (१०१)

is-seema Vaibhava Jushaam. mishataam-gunaanaam
Stotur-Daye Vrishagireesa guneswareem tvam ।
ireva noonam avasairabhainanditam me
Satyaapitam tavabalaatakutobhayatvam ॥ (101)

Daya Devi ! Even while all the other gunas (attributes) of infinite ory, pertaining to the Lord of Vrishagiri, have been looking on with winking eyes, I have praised you, their Empress. Those very gunas e involuntarily congratulating me (for having praised you). at for those who rely on your strength as support there is nothing fear from any quarter, has thus been demonstrated to be true.

The poet's sense of relief at the safe completion of the stotr can be sensed from the sentiments voiced in this sloka. When h began to praise Daya, one of the numerous attributes of Lor Srinivasa, it became incumbent on him to show her off to advantag by belitling the other attributes, and in places subordinating eve the Lord before Daya. By extolling Daya and assigning to her place above the Lord Himself, Desika must have felt that the Lor may not take him amiss; possibly He might also feel glad. Bu in regard to the other gunas (qualities)of the Lord, such as Gnan Bala, Aiswarya etc., the poet was not quite sure that he will be winnin their approbation by singing the praises of one like them, and i places setting them off against her to their disadvantage. Th fear must have been lurking in the poet's mind. Now that the stot has been completed without obstacle, the poet heaves a sigh relief, and at the same time gets the idea that the other gunas ha really applauded his hymn of praise about Daya, and the way he s about it. While thanking them and praising them for it, Desik adroitly sings Daya's praise in a new way.

Nisseema- Vaibhava-Jushaam-gunaanaam. Seema is bounda or limit. Nis-seema is limitless. The Vaibhava or glory of t gunas of the Lord are limitless. They have all been praised by t Srutis. In fact the srutis alone have postulated them.

Those gunas have been watching Desika sing the Daya Satak They have been so watching with eyes wide open—mishataa Appreciation as well as concentration is indicated by this referen to wide open eyes. When intensely looking, the eyes forget, omit, to wink. And in admiration the eyes get opened wide, and the process, winking is suspended.

Now that I come to think of it, the poet seems to say, there nothing surprising in the other qualities of the Lord, not or not getting angry at Daya being praised, but positively becomi happy and pleased thereby. For Daya is Guneswari, the Empre among Gunas. She has once before been referred to as Gunesh Saarvabhaumi गुणेषु सार्वभौमी (*sloka* 30) And no subject is going take offence if the King (or Queen) ruling over him or her is praise

Therefore they themselves तैरेव felicitate the poet on his Da stotra. That they can't help doing so is indicated by the wo *avasaihi.* They do so spontaneously involuntarily, who heartedly.

Readers will be aware of Kalidasa's famous saying *Aaparitoshaat-vidushaam na-saadu manye*. No poet is satisfied until and unless he obtains the approval and approbation of the learned and the wise. This poet of poets, Vedanta Desika, therefore talks here with satisfaction and pride about the approval and appreciation, which the other qualities of the Lord are lavishing on his Daya stotra. Elsewhere also there are several similar expressions in Desika's works (e.g.) *Vaisampaayana - Saunaka - prabrutayaha - Srehtaassirah-Kampinaha*, where reference is pointedly made to the approbation of the great Maharishis.

From the fact that the other gunas, who have been referred to in the course of the stotra in not very complimentary terms, have ungrudgingly congratulated Desika for his having praised Daya, Desika weaves out one more praise-worthy feature in Daya Devi. Her strength and support are capable of dispelling fear from the mind of her adherents and votaries. Where Daya is favourable, there is no need to entertain fear from any quarter. The Upanishads have in several places spoken of the fearlessness of those who rely on the Lord. नबिभेतिकुतश्चनेति ; नबिभेतिकदाचनेति. They have nothing to fear, nobody to be afraid of. That courage and fearlessness, it is here pointed out, are the result of reliance on Daya's strength. Incidentally one more plume is added to Daya's attractive and all-round greatness, a greatness always associated with the Lord, but one which He really acquires through Daya Devi.

The word मे (me)at the end of the 3rd pada of the stotra is so placed that it can be taken with the word *abhinanditam* that precedes it, as also with the word *Satyaapitam*, that follows it. Desika's dexterity in handling words is indeed superb, "In my case he seems to say, "felicitation by the great gunas has taken place, and also the establishment of the truth that there is no cause for fear for those who rely on the strength of Daya.

अद्यापि तद्वृषगिरीशदये भवत्या
मारम्भमात्रमनिदंप्रथमस्तुतीनाम् ।
संदर्शितस्वपरनिर्वहणा सहेथाः
मन्दस्य साहसमिदं त्वयि वन्दिनो मे ॥ (१०२)

Adhyaapi tat Vrishagireesa Daye Bhavatyaam
Aarambhamaatram anidampratamastuteenam ।
Sandarsita-svapara-nirvahanaa-sahetaaha
Mandasya saahasam idam tvayi vandino me. ॥ (102)

Daya of Vrishagireesa! Even for those primordial hymns (the Vedas) praise of you is still (even to-day) only in the initial stage. In respect of such a you, this dull-witted person (i.e., myself) who is only a Vandhi (encomiast) has been guilty of great audacity (in weaving out a complete poem of 100 slokas). This audacity on my part has to be pardoned by you, demonstrating thereby your capacity to forgive, and to make others forgive.

In this sloka Vedanta Desika tenders his apology for having sung the Daya Sataka. He calls his attempt a Saahasa. साहस a rash and audacious act. "Fools rush in where angels fear to tread." Desika's apologia is conceived in that same way. He refers to the fact that the ancient srutis, which are the first and foremost hymns of praise, have if at all, but very vaguely hinted at Daya, and left the matter there, without elaboration or elucidation. The srutis evidently felt unequal to the task of adequately praising Daya. But here I am, says Desika, a mere Vandhi a Vaithaalika, one who is employed in palaces to sing the praise of royalty, and a mandha मन्द a person of weak intellect, who has had the boldness, if not affrontery, to sing a whole stotra about that self-same Daya. So saying, Desika prays for pardon. He has to be pardoned by the Srutis, and he has to be pardoned by Daya Devi herself. He appeals to Daya and prays that she may be pleased to pardon him, and also secure to him the pardon of the Vedas. This dual capacity of Daya is referred to by the expression *Sva-para-nirvahana* स्वपर-निर्वहण.

She can forgive apacharaas committed in regard to her. She can also get others to forgive the faults and sins of commission and omission in regard to those others by those others themselves. How else has she been able to secure for us the protection of the Lord, and made Him ignore, overlook, and forgive our enormous sins? That Daya Devi is herself capable of saahasaas has been referred to in sloka 71 above. So she can appreciate well-intentioned and well-meant saahasaa in others. Only it must not be the *atisaahasas* referred to in sloka 94. " Daya is audacious in seeking to get protection even for me", says Desika, "why should I not be equally audacious, and sing the praises of such a great and bold benefactor?"

प्रायो दये त्वदनुभावमहाम्बुराशौ
प्राचेतसप्रभृतयोऽपि परं तटस्थाः ।
तत्रावतीर्णमतलस्पृशमाप्लुतं मां
पद्मापतेः प्रहसनोचितमाद्रियेथाः ॥ (१०३)

Prayo Daye tvadanubhava-mahaamburasau
Praachetasaprabrutayopi param tatastaaha ।
Tatraavateernam-atalasprusam-aaplutam-maam
Padmaapateh Prahasanochitam aadriyethaaha. ॥ (103)

Daya Devi! It looks as if even great persons like Valmiki have confined themselves to the shores of the great and mighty ocean of your glory, (i.e., stopped short of stepping into the waters). I got into that ocean, was very soon lifted off my feet, and began to flounder (float). And thereby I became the object of fun and ridicule to the Consort of Lakshmi, who sweetly smiled at my audacity. and consequent discomfiture. You please take me in your protection.

The poet had thought of the Vedas in the first instance and sung in the previous sloka about his having done something they had omitted to do. In this sloka, he thinks of the Upa-Brahamanas (The Ithihasas and the Puranas) and how there is no full-fledged praise of Daya in any of them. It dawns upon him once again that he has purported to do something which the authors of those great works, Itihasas and Puranas, deliberately left unattempted. He compares his state to that of one who foolishly plunges into an ocean, when all wise people carefully stick to the shore.

Praachetasa is Valmiki. Praachetasa Prabrutayopi, even Valmiki and others like him. What did they do? They were param tatastaaha, they very much confined themselves to the shore, being afraid of getting into the sea, or rathar of being drawn into it. They stuck to the shore so firmly, to *terra firma* in preference to the sucking waters of the sea.

And what is that sea or rather ocean? *Tvad-anubhaava maha amburaasi.* The great ocean of Daya's glory. Hitherto Daya was referred to as a water-course, lake, river, sea and so on. Here it is Daya's glory (tvad anubhaava) त्वदनुभाव that is the mahaamburasi, ocean. Afraid of being drowned in the waters of that great ocean, Valmiki, Vyasa, Parasara and the rest of that grand and glorious galaxy of Rishis (Seers) were content to be *tatastaas* shore stayers. When compared to the srutis, the Itihasas and Puranas deal a little more with Daya. Hence the reference to those authors as taking their stand on the shore of Daya's glory. The use of the word '*Praayaha*' also indicates this, that they were mostly tatastaas.

On the other hand, what is it I have done? Undaunted, I stepped in and plunged into the ocean, only to find that the depth of it was too much for me. I could not fathom its depth, could not touch the ground underneath. I was lifted up, and made to float and flounder. Fool that I am, I was not deterred by the several great souls like Valmiki not daring to come even near the water line, and I took my plunge,—Sri Desika seems to say.

Three words have been employed here to show the three stages (1) avateernam (2) a-talasprusam and (3) aaplutam, (1) getting down into the waters. (2) unable to get a foot-hold on the ground, and (3) lifted up by the buoyancy of water, and made to float.

Tala-sprik or ground-toucher, is a term used to indicate a person who knows a thing fully well, knows all about it, its pros and and its cons. Atalasprisa used here is intended to show how uninformed Desika is about Daya. He seems to suggest by the use of that term about himself, that he has not really understood about Daya's greatness and glory. As soon as he gets in, he finds himself lifted off his feet, and unable to touch ground. This is not a case of a gradual depth. It is a sudden and abrupt depth, as is indicated by *avateernam* followed by *atalasprusam*. The wise men knew, and hence desisted from getting in.

The ever watchful Lord and His Consort have been witnessing all that Desika does, and gets involved in. And Their lovely lips get curved in a sweet smile. It is like fond parents watching the toddlings of their darling child, and getting amused thereat. That the Lord loves tatastaas was shown even in the 9th sloks. He is a big ocean of Daya,—Karunaa-Varunaalayam. But He discovers and discloses Himself only to *tatastaas*,—those who stand on the shore, aghast at the immensity of His Swaroopa, Roopa, Vibhava etc., realising the truth of the Upanishadic saying '*Avignaatam Vijaanataam Vignaatam Avijaanataam*'. Vrishasaila tatastaas, were therefore rewarded by Him by His disclosing Himself to them as the Resplendent Lord of the Seven Hills. So too the *tatastaas* like Valmiki were very much beloved of Him and were the recipients of His Grace in an extraordinary measure.

Vedanta Desika instead of emulating those *tatastaas* behaves contrariwise by plunging in. So in an "I told you so," mood the Lord smiles on seeing Desika's discomfiture, floundering in the depths of Daya.

He does not smile alone but in concert with His Consort, Padmavati. Leelarasa, or the sweentess of sport, is indulged in by the Lord and His spouse, Lakshmi. They therefore enjoy this rasa also, and smile. That the smile is not one of disdain or contempt, but one of love and endearment is indicated by the Upasarga *pra* prefixed to *hasana*. (hasana can also mean ridiculing).

However much the child may realise the fondness of its parents, when they smile at its discomfiture, it is apt to feel hurt. In that mood Desika appeals to Daya Devi and prays, please take me in your protection, "*aadriyetaaha* आद्रियेथा: This is the last prayer of Desika to Daya Devi in this stotra. In fact this is the last of the slokas in this stotra addressed to Daya Devi.

वेदान्तदेशिकपदे विनिवेश्य बालं
देवो दयाशतकमेतदवादयन्माम् ।
वैहारिकेण विधिना समये गृहीतं
वीणाविशेषमिव वेङ्कटशैलनाथः ॥ (१०४)

Vedantadesikapade vinivesya baalam
Devo Dayaasatakam etad avaadayan-maam ।
Vaihaarikena vidhinaa samaye griheetam
veenaa visesham iva Venkatasailanaathaha ॥ (104)

That Deva who is the Lord of Venkatasaila has placed (me) this infant on the Peeta (pedestal) of Vedantacharya and has made me give out this Daya Satakam,—even as a rasika takes up a veena in a delightful mood dictated by the enjoyment of leela (sport), and makes that veena sing beautifully.

In this sloka which is fraught with several very great and important meanings and suggestions, the chief idea is that of *satvika-tyaga*. सात्विक त्याग To the vishistadvaitin everything is the Lord's, and must be offered up to the Lord. This must be done in the threefold way of swaroopatyaga, kartrutva-tyaga and phala-tyaga. The central idea of this sloka is that by himself the poet is incapable of producing a finished work of religious art like this

Daya Sataka, and that it is the great Lord who resides on Venkatachala, and has an infinite instinct for sport, that has really made Desika give out this Daya Sataka. The analogy is of a great musician (Vainika vidwan) taking up a veena, when the muse is on him and he feels like indulging in it, and making it give out delicious and delightful music. The musician here is Lord Srinivasa. The veena is Vedanta Desika. The Lord who has played this Daya Satakam on the Veena of Vedanta Desika is very aptly referred to as "Devaha" देवः. The word "deva" not only denotes divinity, but also a taste for sport or *kreeda* क्रीडा. The words समये गृहीतं "Samaye griheetam" are also very aptly used. The vainika vidwan and the veena are always there, but it is only on occasions that the mood comes on the vainika and it is that period that is indicated by the word "samaye"—at the proper time. So also in regard to the Lord and Vedanta Desika, the word "samaye" has got very great significance. The Lord did not think it fit to sing Daya Sataka by Himself, or through others, before this Stotra was sung through Desika. So also Desika was chosen as the fit and apt instrument, through which Daya Sataka has to be given out to the world, at a particular point of time (samaya) in his life. The word "samaye" therefore indicates the coalescence of the Lord's sankalpa (desire) to sing the praise of Daya Sataka through Desika, and Desika's own *sukrita* (good deeds) entitling him to that benefit.

Desika here has referred to himself as "baalaha" बालः. Baalaha means an infant, an immature person. This word is employed here by way of *naichanusandhana*, the *anusandhaana* or expression of one's smallness and incapacity, felt out of a sincere sense of humility. In Tamil it is called "அவையடக்கம்" (avaiadakkam). The idea sought to be conveyed is, that just as the veena, which though incapable of giving out musical notes of its own accord, at the touch of the deft fingers of an expert vainika gives out pleasant and melodious notes which are enchanting and rapturous to the hearers, so too, though by himself Vedanta Desika may be nothing and may almost be akin to an *achetana* (inert matter) like the veena—yet the clever and capable Lord has utilised him to give out Daya Sataka to the world. The word "*baala*" reminds one of the Brahadaaranya Upanishad. One of the mantraas there says that after having learnt everything that is worth learning, the great ones will be like children: बाल्येन तिष्ठासेत्

Though it might not have been Desika's intention, yet the word "baalaha" employed is so apt and applicable to the greatness and scholarship of Vedanta Desika. As he has stated about himself in the Sankalpa Sooryodaya, by the age of 20 he had mastered all the *vidyas* (branches of learning). His learning and his modesty are by-words in the history of Vaishnavism. Though in the sphere of controversy he bowed to none, in regard to his conduct through life, he was child-like and simple in the extreme, short in stature and unassuming and modest by nature.

The opening words of the sloka—"Vedantadesika pade vinivesya baalam" are to be understood and enjoyed in the context of a great event in Desika's life, gratefully mentioned by him in several places in his own works. Born in the year 1268 A.D. in Kancheepuram, this Acharya who was named Venkatanatha by his parents, stayed for a number of years at Tiruvahindrapuram (near Cuddalore New Town in South Arcot District in the Madras State) where he did penance, and acquired the *prasaada* or bounty of the Lord. Then he travelled far and wide, and visited almost all the sacred places in this holy land of Bharata-varsha from Badrinath to Cape Comorin. Having returned to his native place Kancheepuram, he was living there for several years, leading the life of a true Vaishnavite Acharya. A call came to him then from Srirangam, the headquarters of great acharyas from Alavandar downwards. It was a command from Lord Sri Ranganatha Himself, the Presiding Deity of that place and indeed was couched as such: "Sreemat Sri Ranganathasya Vishvaksenasya saasanam." श्रीमत् श्रीरङ्गनाथस्य विष्वक्सेनस्य शासनम्. The great and celebrated annual Adhyayana Utsavam of that place (inaugurated by Tirumangai Alwar centuries ago) was objected to and its performance obstructed by Advaitins who protested against the importance given to the Tamil works of the Alwars known as the Divya Prabhandam, very highly venerated by all the Sri Vaishnava Acharyas from the time of Nathamunigal of the ninth century A.D., To establish the sanctity and supremacy of the Divya Prabhandam by refuting the arguments of of Advaitins against the Tamil language and against introducing the Tamil Scriptures into Temple rituals, Desika's services were requisitioned by the Acharyas then residing at Srirangam. Desika readily started from Kanchi and reached Srirangam; and it is said that after a long and serious debate and disputation, stretching over several days, Vedanta Desika by his wide scholarship, keen intellect, and polemic skill, and, above all, his deep and abiding devotion and admiration for the Tamil verses of the Alwars, vanquished the adversaries and made them accept the Prabhandas, especially Nammalwar's Tiruvoimozhi as Saaras-saraswataanaam सारस्सारस्वतानां and Samhita-Saarvabhoumee संहितासार्वभौमी (as the quintessence of language, and as the empress among Samhitas). The Adyayana Utsavam was restored, and celebrated more grandly than in previous years.

Lord Sri Ranganatha in recognition of this great achievement of Vedanta Desika is said to have conferred on him the title " Vedantacharya." For the authenticity of this happening and this honour done to Desika, we are not left to rely on the admiring utterances of a disciple or follower, or on mere tradition. For, this incident, this conferment of this title by the Lord, has been gratefully acknowledged by Desika himself in his works. The second half of the first sloka of his Adhikarana Saravali runs as follows:

विश्वस्मिन्नामरूपाण्यनुविहितवता तेन देवेन दत्तां
वेदान्ताचार्यसंज्ञामवहितबहुवित्सार्थमन्वर्थयामि

Here is a definite and categorical statement that the great Lord, who gives a form and a name to this universe and everything that is there, was graciously pleased to bestow on Desika the samgnya संज्ञा " Vedantacharya." A *samgnya* is a name or noun having a special meaning and peculiar significance (by the use of which a person is definitely indicated to the exclusion of the rest). Desika is not vain enough to refer to it as a title or *biruda* बिरुद: he calls it modestly a *samgnya*. But what a name! VEDANTACHARYA There is only one Vedantacharya and that is the Lord Himself. Vide Vedantakrit Vedavidevachaaham (Gita). He has been pleased to confer that name and that appellation on Venkatanatha, the poet of Kanchi. But when one comes to think of it, who but the owner of a thing or name can give it away to another and make it that other's own? This is also pointed out by this same acharya. In his Stotra Bashya (Commentary on the Stotra Ratna) it has been said Svakam-iti-Hari-dattam-Nigamantacharyakam—स्वकमिति हरिदत्तं ... निगमान्ताचार्यकं (Nigamanthacharyatva given to me as it was His own, to be kept as my own). As already said, this grant of " Vedantacharya " title is referred to in ever so many places in the numerous works of this prolific writer in three languages, Sanskrit, Tamil, and Manipravala. This is not the place to gather together and catalogue all those references in the poet's works to this very unique event in his life.

But how comes it that what Lord Ranganatha of Srirangam did is attributed to Lord Srinivasa of Tirupati, and why has it been sung that Venkatasailanatha placed this poet on the pedestal of Vedantacharya? The answer is furnished not only by the general and well known theory that all the Lords in the several temples are one and the same, but by a special identity between Ranganatha and Srinivasa enjoyed by Tiruppanalwar in the third verse of his "Amalanaadipiran"—வடவேங்கட மாமலை வானவர்கள் சந்திசெய்ய நின்றான் அரங்கத் தரவினணையான். The great Lord of Vaikunta first alighted on Venkatachala where He stood for a time before going to Srirangam and lying down there on His serpent couch. So it is quite proper and apt to say that Lord Srinivasa gave to Desika the name and title Vedantacharya.

Acharya and Desika are synonymous and interchangeable terms, and so Vedantacharya and Vedanta Desika convey the same meaning. The poet whose name was Venkatanatha or Venkatesa has ever since been known as Vedanta Desika and Vedantacharya because that was the appellation that the Lord had given to him.

Another incident in Desika's life has to be recapitulated here. While he was only five years of age, a veritable baalaha बाल: Desika was the recipient of the blessings of his praacharya, प्रचार्य, Vaatsya Varadacharya (Nadadoor Ammal) in the following words:

प्रतिष्ठापितवेदान्तः प्रतिक्षिप्तबहिर्मतः ।
भूयास्त्रैविद्यमान्यस्त्वं भूरिकल्याणभाजनम् ॥

The promising and precocious child was to become an establisher of Vedanta, (Vedanta-pratishtaapaka). When he became that actually, and that too not of one Vedanta but of two Vedantas, Sanskrit and Tamil, the Ubhaya Vedanta, the Lord Himself gave him the name and title of Vedantacharya. This blessing received in early life has been very thankfully and gratefully recorded by Desika in the Sankalpa Sooryodaya and in the second sloka of Adhikarana Saravali. A sketch in colour on the ceiling of the Pradakshina of Lord Varadaraja's shrine on the Hastigiri in Kancheepuram depicts this incident in Desika's life.

One can now see a new meaning and significance in the words Vedanta-Desika-pade-vinivesya-Baalam employed in the sloka.

This great honour was bestowed on him when he was literally a child, a *baala*.It looks as if the Lord only put His sanction and seal on what a great Acharya had done. He once again made true what a true and sincere devotee of His had said. Satyam-vidhatum-nija-bhritya-bhaashitam. सत्यं विधातुं निजभृत्यभाषितं.

That the Vedantacharya-pada bestowed on him is really a ubhaya-Vedantacharya-pada is also very subtly and beautifully demonstrated by this great poet in and by this sloka. This Daya Sataka has been, it is said, sung by the Lord with Desika as a Veena-visesha,—an excellent Veena. Adhikarana Saravali which avowedly deals with the Brahma Sutras and the Sri Bhashya is a treatise on the Sanskrit Vedanta. The penultimate sloka therein conceived in the same saatvika-tyaga style as this sloka of Daya Sataka, refers to the Lord having given out that Adhikarana Saravali employing Desika as a conch, paanchajanya......पाञ्चजन्यक्रमेण स्वाघ्मातं रङ्गनाथः स्वयमिति मुखरीकृत्य (मां) सम्मोदतेस्म. Here the Daya Sataka has been given out in the form of the sweet and mellifluous notes of the Veena, the softest of musical instruments. The conch is a loud instrument employed in war as can be be seen from the first chapter of the Bhagavat-Geeta. Desika never sings casually and never employs words haphazard. The difference between the conch (shanka) and the veena is the difference between the two Vedantas, in both of which Desika had attained a high degree of proficiency. The Sanskrit Vedanta involves polemic warfare. The Tamil Vedanta provides sweet and quiet enjoyment. Even the Lord finds great sweetness and attraction in the Prabhandas; for, they are *Sadhyaha—Paramaatmani—chitta—ranjaka—tamaihi* सद्यः परमात्मनि चित्तरञ्जकतमैः and Svaadu Suvyahritaani. स्वादु सुव्याहृतानि. And so they are like the sweet and pleasing notes issuing from the Veena. In fact the Lord Himself is sweet to the Alwars like the notes of the Veena. Vide *யாழினிசையே !* and *முன்நல்யாழ்பயில் நூல்நரம்பின் முதிர் சுவையே* of Nammalwar. Daya Sataka is thus the quintessence of the Prabhandas, whereas Adhikarana Saravali is the summary of the meaning and import of the Brahmasutras, about which there are as many views as there are Bhashyakaaraas (commentators). Further elaboration is needless. The Sanskrit Vedanta is like the Ganges, muddy, violent and forceful. The Dramidopanishad is like the Yamuna, dark, cool and pleasant. They were flowing as two different streams till they were united and blended into one stream, the ubhaya

Vedanta system, by the mingling of the Saraswati (words) of Vedanta Desika, thereby bringing about a Triveni, a confluence of three streams. This is the contribution of Vedanta Desika to Vishistadwaita Siddhanta and Vaishnavite religion, for which he has been justly famous through the centuries.

Even in regard to the form of satvika-tyaga indulged in in this sloka, Desika follows closely in the footsteps of Nammalvar. In the 9th Tiruvoimozhi, in the 7th Pathu, Nammalwar has stated that his verses were sung through his mouth by the Lord Himself: என் சொல்லால் யான் சொன்ன இன்கவி என்பித்து தன் சொல்லால் தான் தன்னைக் கீர்த்தித்த மாயன், (Making it appear as if these are my words and my verses, the Lord has really sung about Himself by His own words).

In regard to Daya Sataka the singer is the Lord, of course, through Desika. But the subject of the song is not the Lord Himself, as it was in the Tiruvoimozhi, but Daya Devi. Daya Devi being the consort of the Lord, He probably felt it delicate to Himself sing her praise; for that purpose probably He Himself came into this world as Sri Thoopul Venkatanatha (Vedanta Desika) and has sung Daya's praise in the form of this Daya Sataka. Desika has been claimed and acclaimed to be an incarnation of Lord Srinivasa, and certainly one of the chief purposes of that incarnation must have been to sing about Daya to whome He owes His real greatness, and because of whose achievements he becomes ' Visuddhanam vaachaam stutipadam—विशुद्धानां वाचां स्तुतिपदं (sloka 68 ante) the subject of praise by the srutis.

Thus this sloka seems to give the Avataara-rahasya, the Avataara-prayojana and the Avataara-karya of the author of this work, Vedanta Desika.

अनवधिमधिकृत्य श्रीनिवासानुकम्पा-
मवितथविषयत्वाद्विश्वमव्रीडयन्ती ।
विविधकुशलनीवी वेङ्कटेशप्रसूता
स्तुतिरियमनवद्या शोभते सत्त्वभाजाम् ॥ (१०५)

Anavadhim adhikrltya Sreenivaasaanukampaam
avitathavishayatvaad-visvam avreedayantee ।
Vividhakusalaneevee Venkatesaprasootaa
stutir-iyam anavadyaa sobhate sattvabhaajaam ॥ (105)

This stotra begotten by (of) Venkatesa,—which deals about the limitless Daya of Lord Srinivasa,—which contains matter not one of which is untrue or false, and about which therefore no one need feel abashed or ashamed,—which is a fountain-head for all kinds of auspiciousness,—and which is free from all fault or blemish, this Stotra is sure to shine glorious in the eyes of all Saatvic men.

In this and the next sloka Desika harks back to the Maalini मालिनी metre which he handled in the fourth decad. It is one of his favourite metres, and one with which he ends several of his stotras.

With many poets, after the main theme is over, even if they sing further slokas by way of winding up, those slokas will be flat and commonplace. Not so with this master poet. One has only to enjoy the language and sentiments contained in this and the later slokas to agree with what has been stated here.

The fine medium of *slesha* is employed in this sloka to reconcile the apparent conflict between slokas 102 and 103 on the one hand (in which the poet has talked of himself as the author of this stotra) and sloka 104, on the other, (in which he said that the Lord it was who gave out this stotra). After all it is Venkatesa who is the author of this hymn of praise. (This is an obvious reference to his having been named after the great Lord Venkatesa). Whether it be Lord Venkatesa of the Seven Hills or the poet Venkatesa of Kancheepuram this stotra is Venkatesa-prasoota वेङ्कटेश प्रसूता born to (of) Venkatesa, (produced by Venkatesa).

The word Stutihi स्तुतिः is of the feminine gender. So the child is a girl. The rest of the Stotra describes the nature and qualities of this excellent girl.

Anavadhim - Sreenivaasaanukampaam - adhikritya—Concerning that limitless anukampa or Daya of Srinivasa. The subject of this Stuti or Stotra is Daya. The child enjoys the blessings of Daya.

Avitatha-vishayatvaat-visvam-avreedayantee—No one need be ashamed of anything contained in this stotra because its contents are all *avitatha* अवितथ falseless, *i.e.*, true. *Vitatha* means false: a-vitatha is therefore true. Viswam is the entire world avreedayantee अव्रीडयन्ती means, makes it unnecessary to be ashamed or abashed about: why? because its *vishaya* विषय or content is avitatha. If a woman with half-closed eyelids is praised by a person as *visaalaakshee*, विशालाक्षी (broad-eyed lady), every one concerned must feel ashamed. But when existing excellence is truly and appropriately praised, every one feels happy.

The girl has such high qualities like truth, purity and chastity, that no one need in the slightest feel ashamed about her, but every one can legitimately be proud of her.

Vividha-kusala-neevee—विविधकुशलनीवी Neevi is the knot of a lady's garment. It also means the capital or principal sum producing or earning interest or other profit by way of augmentation. It may therefore be taken to refer to the source or fountain-head.

Kusala refers to what is right, proper, auspicious and happy, This stotra is thus said to be capable of yielding to those who study it, welfare, happiness and auspiciousness. *Vividha* means varied. For all sorts and kinds of happiness this Stuti is the source.

Anavadyaa—अनवद्या blameless, irreproachable. The stuti is faultless. The girl has faultless form and so, extremely handsome.

Just as a girl born of a good family, having faultless character and possessing a very attractive personality will be praised by all right-minded persons, this stotra also is highly appreciated and enjoyed by Satvic-minded persons. (Compare Desika's enjoyment of Ramanuja's works in this same strain in the sloka मुनिबहुमत सारा Muni-bahumata-saara.........of Yatiraja Saptati)

There seems to be no limit to the sense of gratitude that Desika bears towards the Lord. He is thankful and happy that the Lord has given to him His own name, conferred on him a title that belongs only to Him, and also given him the authorship of a poem of this grandeur and excellence.

शतकमिदमुदारं सम्यगभ्यस्यमाना-
न्वृषगिरिमधिरुह्य व्यक्तमालोकयन्ती ।
अनितरशरणामाधिराज्येऽभिषिञ्चे-
च्छमितविमतपक्षा शार्ङ्गधन्वानुकम्पा ॥ (१०६)

Satakam idam udaaram samyag abhyasyamaanaan
Vrishagirim adhiruhya vyaktam aalokayantee ।
Anitarasaranaam aadhirajye abhishinchet
samitavimatapakshaa sarngadhanvaanukampaa ॥ (106)

The Grace (Daya) of that Wielder of the Saarnga (Bow) will ascend the heights of Vrishagiri and cast her benign glances on all who correctly and well repeat (recite again and again) this centum of verses, which is capable of liberally conferring all good; and after dispelling all hostile forces and factors, she will confer on them the Kingdom ruled over by persons who have no support but hers (Daya's).

The previous sloka dealt with the benefits which can be obtained by a study of this Stotra by extolling its excellence and incidentally indicating those benefits. This sloka is more avowedly a *phala-sruti* फलश्रुति for this stotra. The usual scheme indulged in by many of the Alwars in the last verse of each decadium of their songs is adopted here by Desika. It is to extol the *Vishaya vailakshanya*, the *vaktru vailakshanya* and the *Prabanda Vailakshanya*, and then to indicate the good and great things that will be obtained by those who study the work. That is to say, excellence of the topic, greatness of the author and the merit of the work itself,—these will be followed by a reference to the benefits obtainable by the study thereof. Readers would have noticed how in sloka 105 the threefold excellence (of the topic, author and work respectively) had been dealt with. This sloka makes pointed reference to the *phala* or fruit. It starts by reiterating the prabandha-vailakshanya. This is a Satakam,—a hundred. It is udaaram—उदारम् generous and munificent, lofty and excellent, noble and illustrious. The Lord is all that and Daya Devi is also all that. This Satakam equally with them is also *udaaram*.

Abhyaasa is repetition. *Samyag* is well and correctly. *Samyag abhyasyamaanaan*,—those who truly and well recite and repeatedly recite. They will recite it again and again to enjoy to their hearts' content the beauties of language and sentiment enshrined in the verses, and to incessantly contemplate on the greatness and glory of Daya Devi as depicted therein. Just as the enjoyment of the Lord is ever fresh and never stale ஆராவமுதம் and नित्यापूर्वं, the enjoyment of the Stotra also will always be fresh. Each time one reflects on a sloka of this poem, some new idea emanates, some new beauty comes to the surface. It is a perennial stream of literary beauty and artistic excellence, that gushes forth all the while, exhilarating the spirit, and elevating the soul into realms of mystic communion with the Lord Himself, through the instrumentality of Daya.

Samyag-abhyaasa has been mentioned here to denote recitation and reflection of the Stotra with a full understanding of the meaning and significance of the verse, and not a mere parrot-like repetition.

Those who revel in the language and the sentiment of this Satakam will become the recipient of Daya's Kataksha (benign glances). She will see them well, and clearly—*vyaktam aalokayantee*. She will see them from the heights of Vrishagiri on which she has got up. *Vrishagirim-adhiruhya-aalokayantee.* Here it is plainly asserted that Vrishagiri is really the seat of Daya Devi, not so much the Lord's. This idea is reinforced by the poet's deliberate omission to refer to the Lord in this sloka as the Lord of Vrishagiri, but as Saarngadhanvaa. In all the 108 slokas of this stotra barring only a few, reference has been made to the Hill by one name or another. In almost all of the large number of those slokas the Hill has been linked with the Lord. This (106th) is one of the very few slokas in which there is a reference to the Hill, and yet the Lord is designated by another name. There seems to be no end to the literary devices indulged in by this poet to drive his point home. That there is a deliberately intended suggestion (dhvani ध्वनि) will be clear from the use of the word Saarngadhanvaa, which in turn is calculated to remind the reader of sloka 28, in which the Lord was referred to as Saarngee. It was in and by that sloka that we were told that Vrishagiri is the Lord's *vijayasthana* विजयस्थान. Why it is so, is explained in this 106th sloka by referring to Daya Devi as having ascended this Hill—*Vrishagirim-adhiruhya*. Tirumala is thus the capital city of Daya's Kingdom, and the Lord taking His residence there is essentially a Dayaavaan.

From the top of Vrishagiri, Daya Devi looks graciously upon those who have mastered this stotra sung in her praise. And at once she drenches them in the cool and life-giving stream of her protective Kataksha. *Abhisheka* literally means sprinkling water, or wetting and drenching. It is because the installation and the crowning of a King closely follow his being bathed with "coronation water," the word *Abhisheka* has come to denote the installation of Kings.

The high altitude of Vrishagiri is conducive to give Daya Devi a good vision (vyaktam aalokayantee) of the entire earth situate beneath. It is also helpful to let loose the cool and pleasant streams of her grace in which to bathe those in the plains, whom she thinks fit to be bathed therein. So they are all coronated, to change the metaphor. She crowns them kings—Abhishinchet.

What is the Kingdom over which they are crowned? *Anitara-saranaanaam-aadhirajye* अनितर शरणानामाधिराज्ये The great kingdom reserved for those who look to no one but the Lord and His Daya for help and protection. Aadhirajya is sovereignty, overlordship. The Kingdom of Heaven is the Kingdom of service to the Lord and His chosen devotees. This is referred to by Desika in several places as Kinkaratva-aadhiraajyam किङ्करत्वाधिराज्यम् the sovereignty of service. This is the sovereignty desired by those who are *anitarasaranaas*, those whose sole refuge is the Lord and the Lord alone, and who have no taste for, and do not desire, any *purushartha* except service to Him. Those who are the recipients of Daya's gracious Kataksha because of their having mastered this Satakam, are installed as sovereigns in that Kingdom of Service or Kainkarya. Worldly wealth, power and position, and even the exalted posts held by Brahma, Indra and the other Devas, are the gifts that Daya Devi bestows on her votaries who desire to obtain those preferments. But they are not *anitara-saranaas* or true *paramaikantins*, for though they may look to the Lord's Daya alone for help and assistance, their desires are not for the Lord and the Lord alone. They belong to the first three categories of persons who approach the Lord, as mentioned in the Bhagavad Gita, the *aarta*, the *arthaarthi* and the *gignaasu*. The fourth person there enumerated is the Gnani, who is specially extolled by the Lord Himself as His soul. What special gifts are reserved for the Gnani who wants nothing of the Lord but service to the Lord, those are all available to the persons who master this centum of praise—Daya Satakam.

The words *Samita-Vimata-pakshaa*—शमित विमतपक्षा meaning having conquered the enemies' forces have to be understood both in relation to the upasaka's foes, and also to the opposing forces ranged against Daya. Both sets of enemies are conquered and the King is installed on the throne.

Saarngadhanvaanukampa, the Daya of the wielder of the Saarnga (bow). This mode of reference to Daya furnishes as it were the reason for her ability to quell opposing forces. Is she not the Daya of the Powerful Lord who holds the great Saarnga in His hand?

विश्वानुग्रहमातरं व्यतिषजत्स्वर्गापवर्गां सुधा-
सध्रीचीमिति वेङ्कटेश्वरकविर्भक्त्या दयामस्तुत ।
पद्यानामिह यद्विधेयभगवत्संकल्पकल्पद्रुमात्
झंझामारुतधूतचूतनयतः सांपातिकोऽयं क्रमः ॥ (१०७)

Visvaanugrahamaataram vyatishajatsvargaapavargaam sudhaa
saddhreecheem iti Venkateswarakavir-bhaktyaa Dayaam astuta ।
Padyaanaam iha yadvidheya bhagavatsankalpakalpadrumaat
jhanjhaamaarutadhootachootanayatah-sampaatikoyam kramaha ॥(107)

The poet Venkatesa has thus out of devotion sung the praise of Daya, who is the mother (of all) capable of conferring (all) favours, who brings (unto us) (bestows on us) Swarga and Apavarga (moksha), —and who is ever (sweet and life giving) like nectar, (amrita). And even like ripe mango fruits shaken by strong winds during a hurricane, this particular order of verses in this Stotra has dropped from the Kalpaka tree of the Lord's Sankalpa (will) which is ever subordinate and dependant on (or is at the disposal of) that Daya (whose praise has been sung by the poet Venkatesa).

This and the next sloka, which is the very last sloka of the whole Stotra, are couched in the *Saardoola Vikreedita* metre. As the name itself indicates, the syllables and words leap and frolic even as a leopard does during its sporting moments. This metre contains 19 syllables to a *paada*. It is thus the longest of the several metres employed in this Stotra.

It is only in this sloka that the poet definitely refers to himself as the author. In Sloka 104 a reference was made to his titular name Vedanta Desika. In sloka 105 the name Venkatesa occurs, but it was used ambiguously and could be taken as referring as much to Lord Venkatesa as to himself. By the words Venkateswarakavi employed here, the poet refers to himself by his proper name, and so this is the "mudra sloka," the sloka bearing the seal of the author.

The Stotra was referred to as udaaram उदारं in the previous sloka. The subject of the stotra, Daya Devi, is referred to here as *Visva-anugraha-maataram*. She is the mother. She is a mother who always bestows favours, anugraha-maataram. Nigraha or punishment is unknown to her. She is agnaathanigrahaa—अज्ञातनिग्रहा. She is a favour-bestowing mother to one and all (viswa). Or she is a mother desirous of bestowing all anugrahas (viswa-anugraha).

The second phrase *Vyatishajat-svargaapavargaam* indicates her capacity to confer all the pleasures of *trivarga* and of *moksha.* " Swarga " is here used compendiously to denote the first three purusharthas, dharma, artha, and kama. This phrase used towards the end of the stotra is very reminicent of the words *sootim-apavarga-trivargayoho* of sloka 10 ante, the first sloka in praise of Daya in this stotra. If at the *upakrama* उपक्रम (beginning) of a work, and in its upasamhaara उपसंहार (end) the same idea is given expression to, and if one also finds that idea very often dealt with in the course of the work, it has to be taken that that is the central idea or theme, Taatparya तात्पर्यं, of the work. Tested by these *lingaas* लिङ्गा: or symbols, we can see that the conferment by Daya of Dharma Artha and Kama purusharthas on the one hand, and moksha purushartha on the other is what the author desires to be understood as the chief idea and the prominent theme of the stotra.

That by nature Daya is favour-bestowing was conveyed by the first expression *Visvaanugrahamaataram.* That is her *anugraha-seelatva*—अनुग्रहशीलत्व. Her capacity or power to confer those *anugrahas* in the shape of *trivarga* and *apavarga* is indicated by the second compound *vyatishajat-svargaapavargaam.* This is her *phala-dhana-shakti* फलदानशक्ति. The third epithet (*visheshana*) " sudhaa-sadreecheem " is intended to bring out Daya's intrinsic worth. Even apart from her *anugrahaseelatva* and *phala-dana-shakti*, she is by nature sweet and life-giving, like sudhaa, amrita or nectar.

Iti-dayaam-astuta—Daya has been praised in this manner *i.e.*, in this threefold way. Venkateswara Kavi has praised Daya in this wise. Praise of Daya is itself new. Praise in this wise (iti) is indeed novel. Wherefrom did the poet get inspiration to sing them? Bhaktya भक्तया—Out of the intensity of his devotion to Daya.

Pausing for a moment, the poet looks back on the verses of the stotra; he takes a bird's eye view of their (krama) order, their classification into ten decads, well defined and clearly marked out by the varying metre in which each decad is couched, the topic of each of the decads, and the development of those topics in a strain-less succinct manner. He wonders at the arrangement, at the development, at the language, at the sentiment, at everything that goes to make up for the excellence of the stotra as a finished product of literary, and at the same time religious, art; and the feeling grows on him that this must be the work not of a human mind and human hand, but of that great and mighty *Sankalpa* or will of that great Lord of the Universe, a Sankalpa which he has himself described elsewhere as Visvaparipalana-jagarooka -sankalpa विश्वपरिपालनजागरूक-संकल्प a sankalpa in praise of which this great poet has himself brought out a great and grand drama —the Sankalpa Sooryodaya. This idea is dealt with in the second half of the sloka.

Iha-padyaanaam-ayam-kramaha इह पद्यानां अयंक्रमः Here-of the verses-this order, (*i.e.,*) This particular order of verses in this stotra sung out of the great devotion of the poet towards Daya. The suggestion evidently seems to be that not even the poet's devotion is responsible for the glory of the stotra, but only the Sankalpa or will of the Lord that a Stotra should emanate from this poet in this form with all its fineness and finish. The Lord pleased with the sense of devotion and adoration that the poet has in regard to Daya willed that a stotra of this nature should come out from him. That will is referred to as Bhagavat Sankalpa, (the will of Bhagavan). That Sankalpa in turn is entirely *vidheya* विधेय to Daya, *i.e.*, dependent upon Daya, and subservient to Daya. That Sankalpa is here equated to a Kalpaka Vriksha, the mythical tree in Paradise which is capable of fulfilling all desires expressed in its vicinity. Just as ripe and tasty fruits fall from a mango tree, from this Kalpaka tree of the Lord's will these verses have fallen. Fruits are gathered from a tree, or the tree is shaken by human hand to make the fruits fall down. Only fruits that are ripe will be gathered or made to fall by shaking the branches. Here without anybody's attempt to pluck the fruits or make them fall, the fruits have fallen of their own accord impelled by the strong force of a sweeping gale. That is shown by the reference to 'Jhanjhaamaarutadhootachootanayataha'—as per the law of mango fruits falling down, when the mango tree is shaken by a violent gale. Such a mango tree is compared to the kalpaka tree. Just as the mango tree sheds mango fruits during a gale, this Kalpaka tree has dropped this rich and plentiful lot of fruity verses. The mango tree is shaken by a hurricane, (Jhanjha-maaruth-dhuta). Who shakes the Kalpaka tree here? Daya Devi: She is the Jhanjhaamaaruta or the terrific wind which passes over the Kalpaka tree of the Lord's will and makes it shed these sweet verses of this lovely stotra. That is why the Sankalpa was talked of as Daya-vidheya.

Daya is thus said to have been chiefly instrumental in Desika singing this stotra in her praise. She moved the Sankalpa or the will of the Lord and that Sankalpa in turn has produced this stotra through Desika, all because of Desika's deep devotion to Daya, a devotion equalling if not exceeding, his devotion towards the Lord Himself.

कामं सन्तु मिथःकरम्बितगुणावद्यानि पद्यानि नः
कस्यास्मिञ्छतके सदम्बुकतके दोषश्रुतिं क्षाम्यति ।
निष्प्रत्यूहवृषाद्रिनिर्झरझरत्कारच्छलेनोच्चलन्
दीनालम्बनदिव्यदम्पतिदयाकल्लोलकोलाहलः ॥ (१०८)

Kaamam santu mithah-karambitu-gunaavadyaani-padyaani naha
Kasyaasminchatake sadambu-katake doshasrutim kshaamyati
Nishpratyooha Vrishaadri-nirjharajharatkara-chchalenochalan
Deenaalambana Divya Dampati Dayaa kallola Kolaahalaha ॥ (108)

In our verses let there be excellences and defects intermingled in abundance. But no one's fault-finding words in regard to this centum which is capable of cleansing the hearts of the satvic-minded persons, will ever be tolerated by the mighty onrush and uproar of the waves of the helpless man's support,—the Divine Grace of that Divine Couple,—in the guise of the falls and cascades of Vrishadri flowing with terrific noise.

In slokas 104 to 106 the Stotra and the slokas in it were referred to in very appreciative terms. Sweet as the notes of the Veena (104), a treasure-trove for all auspiciousness (105), and liberal beyond words (106). They all sound like self-praise and the poet is not unaware of it. He adverts to the possibility of the slokas, some or all of them, being described by others as bereft of merit, and being full of faults, in language or sentiment or both. That however does not perturb him. For he has sung this hymn out of his Bhakti (devotion), and it is his humble offering at the feet of Daya conceived in humility and sung in all modesty. If people choose to pick holes in such a work, and/or discover faults, flaws and foibles, no one need bother about it; the poet himself does not mind it. For he is certain that Daya Devi will not tolerate any adverse criticism of this work in praise of her, and that is enough for him. If he had sung it for his own glorification he would have taken adverse criticism to heart, and either attempted to repel it as unfounded and baseless, or if that was not possible accepted the faults and admitted his errors. But in regard to a stotra like this, sung in the true *Satvika tyaga* spirit, where comes the question of minding what others feel or say about it?

Every true devotee who has sung in praise of His God in the fulness of his devotion, if asked about the merits of his songs, will easily admit that they may not be sweet. Probably they are inferior stuff. But it is sweet to the Lord in whose praise it is sung. And the devotee rests content in that feeling. இளைய புன்கவிதையேலும் எம்பிராற்கினியவாறே. After having sung 44 soulstirring verses about Lord Ranganatha, Vipranarayana, better known as 'Tondaradippdoi Alwar,' winds up his Tirumaalai (திருமாலை) with the above words, which mean that though it may be inferior or even bad poetry, it will be sweet to his Lord, (எம்பிரான்—my Lord and Liege). Desika has almost copied the words of that Alwar towards the end of his classical Rahasya-traya-saara, when he sings "கூனுள நெஞ்சுகளால் குற்றமெண்ணி இகழ்ந்திடினும் தேனுள பாதமலர் திருமாலுக்குத் தித்திக்குமே." (Though men with crooked and perverted minds may decry the work by imagining faults and defects, it will taste sweet to the Consort of Lakshmi with feet like flowers exhuding honey). This last sloka of Daya Sataka embodies almost the very sentiments of that Tamil verse.

Desika makes it clear by the opening words of the sloka that if some one told him about the existence of faults along with, possibly, some merits, he was not going to join issue with him over it. Kaamam Santu कामं सन्तु is a trite expression to denote "by all means let it be as you say." It may also mean "let there be as many faults as you would desire."

The rest of the sloka explains why that is of no moment to the poet. Whose hostile criticism is going to be tolerated? कस्य-दोष-श्रुतिं क्षाम्यति *Kasya-dosha-srutim-kshaamyati.*

Daya Devi is certainly not going to allow them even to be heard. The words of critics will get drowned in the mighty noise (Kolaahala) of Daya's forceful flow imitating the noise of the falls of the Tirumalai Hill,—even as a human voice will get drowned in the mighty roar of the waters of the Niagara falls. Readers will remember how in the course of the stotra the flow of Daya had been likened to the cascades on the Hill of Vrishadri (*e.g.*) slokas 31 and 69. *Nirjhara* is a hill cascade.

What is it that rushes so mightily? Daya-kallola-kolaahalaha दया-कल्लोल-कोलाहल:The hostile uproar of the rush of the waves of Daya.

Whose Daya? Divya Dampati Daya. The Daya of the Divine Couple (Sri and Srinivasa). This epithet gives the clue as it were to the interpretation of the Daya of Vrishachalapati referred to in almost every sloka of this stotra. Really only the Daya of the Celestial Couple was talked of in all the slokas of this stotra though it was referred to as Srinivasaanukampa, Padmaa Sahaaya Karunaa etc., in places, and more frequently as Daya Kripa Karuna Anukampa or even as the Daya of Vrishagireesa. Desika has elsewhere established that wherever the Lord or Narayana is talked of in the Srutis and other Shaastraic texts it invariably takes in Sri or Lakshmi also, as the two are inseparable and always go together.

In this sloka there is one epithet or *viseshana* for the Sataka and one for Daya. The Sataka is referred to as sadambu-kataka. Kataka is the cleaning nut plant, the nuts of which have got the power, when added to muddy water, of clearing the water of mud and along with it dirt and impurity. Here the *kataka*, meaning thereby the *sataka*, (centum), is capable of cleaning and clearing the minds of saatvik type of men. It is clear Desika here is thinking of the beautiful Sloka in the Valmiki Ramayana (Balakanda, 2nd Sarga, 5th sloka).

अकर्दममिदं तीर्थं भरद्वाज निशामय ।
रमणीयं प्रसन्नाम्बु सन्मनुष्य मनो यथा ॥

The righteous minded men's minds will be cleared and purified by a study of Daya Sataka. Just as the *Kataka* nut makes the water free from mud and dirt, so also Daya Sataka is capable of clearing the mind of all low thoughts and vicious tendencies and maintaining it in a pure and placid state.

Daya is here described as *Deenaalambana Daya*,—Daya the only help, or source of help, for all helpless beings. *Deena* means not only a poor and humble individual, but one who is miserable and wretched beyond measure and ever dejected and melancholy. *Aalambhanam* is support or prop. The outstanding quality of Daya is the help rendered to those who are utterly helpless.

The stotra started with solidified Daya,—Daya, hard and huge like the Hill. It ends with the torrential flow of Daya,—Daya-Kallola-Kolaahalaha दया-कल्लोल-कोलाहल:

May the Daya of Lord Srinivasa protect all of us!

* * * * *

कवितार्किक सिंहाय कल्याणगुणशालिने ।
श्रीमते वेङ्कटेशाय वेदान्तगुरवे नमः ॥

* * * * *

All Glory to Vedanta Desika
All Glory to Lord Srinivasa
All Glory to Srinivasa's Daya.

* * * * *

सर्वतन्त्रस्वतन्त्राय सिंहाय कविवादिनाम् ।
वेदान्ताचार्यवर्याय वेङ्कटेशाय मङ्गळम् ॥
श्रियःकान्ताय कल्याणनिधये निधयेऽर्थिनाम् ।
श्रीवेङ्कटनिवासाय श्रीनिवासाय मङ्गळम् ॥

The End

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